

Migration Patterns to Russia from Central Asia and the Baltics since Independence

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ABSTRACT

ELIZABETH POTTER: Migration Patterns to Russia From Central Asia and the Baltics Since Independence

This paper examines migration trends in the former Soviet Union with a focus on migration inflows to the Russian Federation since independence. Four countries, three in Central Asia and one as an example of the broader trends in the Baltic countries, Estonia, have been selected for a more thorough analysis. The political and economic conditions since the dissolution of the Soviet Union are assessed for each of these countries and Russia using economic data and internationally recognized political measures. Although there are similarities on how economic and political factors affect migration and broad characterizations of migration periods can be established for the region such as Andrei Korobkov's categorization, migration to Russia is frequently politically or ethnically motivated, although economic reasons offer a viable alternative in certain cases.

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1. An Overview of Migration in the Former Soviet Union

a. Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of independent states created an entirely new pattern of migration in the region as what was formerly internal migration became migration across international borders. Whereas individuals used to migrate across borders of all Soviet Republics within the Soviet Union, immediately after independence, the majority of migration was destined for the Russian Federation. After the United States, Russia has the second largest migrant population in the world with estimates ranging from seven to 12 million migrants in 2005.¹ Of those migrants, an estimated four to seven million of them are labor migrants and 80 percent of the total come from Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.² Migration within the CIS maintains an intra-regional characteristic largely due to shared history, common cultural ties, similar educational systems and corresponding labor markets. Migration trends of the last twenty years in the region of the former Soviet Union reflect the political and economic developments of the region.

This paper analyzes migration trends in the former Soviet Union with a focus on migration inflows to the Russian Federation since independence. It developed from an earlier project that compared language policy effects on migration of ethnic minorities from Kyrgyzstan and Latvia. Because of these countries' language policies, four countries, three in Central Asia and one as an example of the broader trends in the Baltic countries, Estonia, have been selected for a more thorough analysis on migration. The

¹ "'Are You Happy to Cheat Us?' Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Russia," Human Rights Watch Report, February 2009, 10.

² Ibid, 2.

political and economic conditions since the dissolution of the Soviet Union are reviewed for each of these countries and Russia using economic data and internationally recognized political measures. Although there are similarities on how economic and political factors affect migration and broad characterizations of migration periods can be established for the region, migration trends to Russia from the Baltic countries and Central Asia differ vastly between each of these countries. When migration rates are compared to political events in these countries, support for the theory that migration is based on political factors is found in some periods, although only initially for Estonia.

Individual, structural and economic theories of migration all present different aspects of migration, but no single theory can accurately predict or analyze migration in all cases. In the cases of the former Soviet Union, migration trends initially seem driven by political and ethnic factors throughout the 1990s, but not in all cases. By the turn of the century, however, migration rates had leveled off indicating the diminishing importance of political considerations, especially in the Baltics.

Because of the major political and economic transitions in the former countries of the Soviet Union in 1991, this region presents a unique case study on migration. These countries have long faced challenges in accurately recording migration flows due to the dissolution of the Soviet *propiska* system (registration of people); open border policies between CIS countries through most of the 1990s, which resulted in an increase in the number of unregistered migrants; and a lack of resources or political will for accurate statistical systems. Although sources of statistics from former Soviet countries are not always reliable, they can be used to observe general trends in migration when data from multiple sources is collected to check reliability or make a comparison. Due to

availability of data, this paper will focus on inflows to Russia from Central Asia and the Baltic countries rather than outflows of migration from Central Asia.

In the 2008 book *Migration, Homeland and Belonging in Eurasia*, editors Cynthia Buckley and Blair Ruble discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of approaches to migration theory as they relate to the countries of the former Soviet Union. The authors highlight the strengths of neoclassical approaches that evaluate migration on a micro level and account for family strategies and risk management as part of the decision why people choose to migrate or to stay. Neoclassical theory also looks at realistic causal factors including age, health, gender, class and family status. Buckley and Ruble draw attention to the limitations of approaches that tend to emphasize ethnic identity as the sole motivation of migration in post-Soviet cases because it devalues the importance of individual characteristics and their relationship to agency, since a focus on ethnic identity limits the ability to weigh other factors in comparison.³ However, based on trends in the former Soviet Union, emphasis on structural political conditions (such as ethnic tension) affecting individuals are relevant to migration.

Initial migration trends after independence seemed to indicate that migration in the region was primarily driven by political factors, such as nationalism, ethnic conflicts or civil wars, discriminatory language policy, concentration of power in the hands of elites of the titular majority and redistribution of property. A desire for security and political control by the titular nationality led to discriminatory policies against non-titular

³ Blair Ruble and Cynthia Buckley, Eds. *Migration, Homeland, and Belonging in Eurasia*, (Washington, D.C.; Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 3-6.

ethnic groups, primarily against ethnic Russians, within Central Asia and the Baltic countries which caused widespread migration in the early 1990s.⁴

Post-Soviet inflow migration to the Russian Federation can be classified into four divergent periods, which are adapted from researcher Andrei V. Korobkov's categorization of migration trends in the former Soviet Union from his 2007 article "Migration Trends in Central Eurasia: Politics versus Economics".⁵ Although Korobkov analyzes migration data from all former Soviet Union countries, excluding the Baltic countries, the scope of this paper will be limited to Central Asia including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Estonia (Estonia is included as an example of the Baltic migration patterns). Korobkov used these migration periods as an organizational method to create a foundation for predictions of potential ethnic conflict caused by migration and demographic change. Using economic, political and migration data, I aim to improve his categorization to make it more nuanced on a country level rather than to broadly assert that either political or economic factors played the decisive role for migration decisions in a certain period. However, this research does not call into question his conclusion about the possibility of ethnic conflict. Additionally, I will look closer at the ethnic makeup of outmigration and examine how different groups could migrate for different reasons.

⁴ Andrei V. Korobkov et al., "Migration Trends in Central Eurasia: Politics versus Economics," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40.2 (2007): 492

⁵ Andrei Korobkov has worked as an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN since 2000. He graduated from Moscow State University and received a Ph.D. in Economics from the Russian Academy of Sciences and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Alabama. Previously, he has conducted research at the Institute of International Economic and Political Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow and taught at the University of Alabama. Korobkov is the author of about forty academic works, published in the United States, Russia, Turkey, and the former Yugoslavia, in both English and Russian. His research focuses on state-building, nationalism, migration and comparative migration policy.

Korobkov delineates five periods of post-Soviet migration.⁶ For the purpose of presenting data in this paper, the first two periods will be combined because of their relative similarities. According to Korobkov's classification, the first period lasted from 1991-1992 when the intensity of migration was similar to the high level of the late 1980s. This wave primarily included mass migration back to titular homelands, not limited to Russia as a destination, and was driven by political and ethnic considerations. The second period from 1993 through 1995 is characterized by fewer people leaving Russia, but the Russian Federation still gaining large inflows of migrants from the newly independent states, mainly ethnic Russians. Ethnic considerations, such as the strict language law passed in Kazakhstan still drove migrants to leave former Soviet Union states. Since inflow rates to Russia remained high through both periods and this analysis is primarily limited to migration inflows to Russia, period one lasts from 1991 until 1995 for this thesis.

Korobkov's third period lasted from 1996 through 1999 and was a period of relative stability (here forth known as the second period). He asserts that the role of socioeconomic factors and political factors declined leading to lower rates of migration. This period is characterized by the reverse role of political factors leading to lower migration and the increasing importance of economic factors.⁷ However, I contend that although economic factors began to be more important in some cases such as Estonia, political factors still drove migration from Central Asia given the political advantages that Russia offered.

⁶ Korobkov, "Migration Trends," 175-179.

⁷ Ibid, 176-178.

The fourth period (here forth known as the third period) lasted from 2000 until 2004 when Vladimir Putin developed migration policy for Russia that attempted to organize migration by strengthening law enforcement. Korobkov contends that shrinking migration rates were partially due to migration policy. Fewer migrants self-reported that their reasons for going to the Russian Federation were because of ethnic tension in their country of origin.⁸ However, using data on the ethnic composition of migration to Russia, migrants from Central Asia were still not of the titular majority, indicating that migrants may still be affected by political and ethnic considerations. Additionally, using research by Richard Wolfel, I contend that migration policy in Russia only moderately affects migration rates and does not affect migration from Estonia at all.

Korobkov's fifth period began in 2005 through 2009 (in this paper, the fourth period). Migration policies in Russia were somewhat liberalized in order to increase permanent migration over seasonal or labor migration. Migration policies in Russia were relaxed because leaders of the Russian Federation acknowledged the severity of the demographic crisis affecting the country due to low birth rates and higher than the average OECD country death rates. Changes in migration policy included simplification of registration in Russia, incentives for skilled migrants and incentives for long-term migration. According to Korobkov, the period is characterized by fewer people deciding to immigrate for political reasons and a greater number of people choosing to migrate due to economic considerations. Political and economic evidence reviewed in this thesis supports Korobkov's description of the fourth period, although continued low migration from Estonia where unemployment rates were higher than Russia, indicates the

⁸ Ibid, 178.

importance of political rights and liberties despite some discrimination against ethnic minorities.

Throughout this thesis, several types of data are used in the characterization of migration, including annual flows of migrants and measures of economic and political conditions. The 1989 population data on which most of the migration rate calculations are based come from the Soviet Union's census. This dataset also lists the ethnic composition of each country. Migration inflows to Russia from each Central Asian and Baltic country are compiled by the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat). Many of these data are published in a report known as the "Demographic Yearbook of Russia"

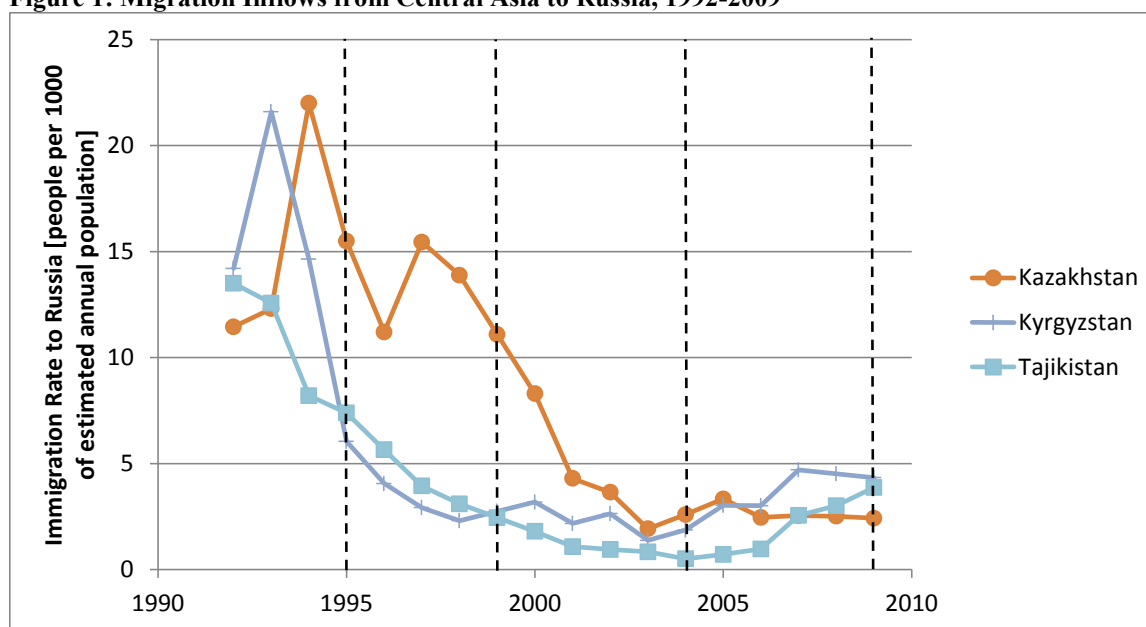
(Демографический Ежегодник России) accessed through the Universal Database of Russian Governmental Publications. The CIA World Factbook was also a source of information on the size of various ethnic populations in different countries. In the category of economic data, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provides annual data for nearly every country of the world, including any GDP-related measures used in this thesis. Assessments of political conditions in various countries are made by several NGOs which seek to promote freedom and/or human rights. Freedom House's Freedom in the World report lists numerical ratings of political freedom in two measures: political rights and civil liberties. Transparency International publishes another measure related to the quality of governance called the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) which is based upon surveys of public perceptions in various countries.

In the tables below, the migration rates for countries in Central Asia and the Baltic countries are listed according to Korobkov's periods of post-Soviet migration.

Table 1: Average Migration Rates to Russia (per thousand)				
Country	Period 1: 1991-1995	Period 2: 1996-1999	Period 3: 2000-2004	Period 4: 2005-2009
Kazakhstan	15.31	13.51	4.15	2.66
Kyrgyzstan	14.12	3.10	2.25	3.92
Tajikistan	10.42	4.23	1.04	2.23
Estonia	9.32	2.36	0.35	0.29
Latvia	8.80	2.17	0.43	0.28
Lithuania	3.22	0.56	0.18	0.12
Source: Russian Demographic Yearbook (Демографический Ежегодник России)				
Note: the rates for Central Asia are based on population estimates based on the 1989 and the most recent census data; the rates for the Baltic countries are based only on 1989 census data.				

Although Korobkov's categorization of migration generally describes post-Soviet migration for the entire former Soviet region, based on Table 1 above, it does not hold true for all of the Central Asian republics. Where migration rates from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan increased somewhat in 2005, the migration rate from Kazakhstan actually decreased; whereas in period two, migration from Kazakhstan does not decrease in the same way as from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This divergence in migration patterns can be observed in Figure 1 below. The periods are delineated by the vertical dashed lines.

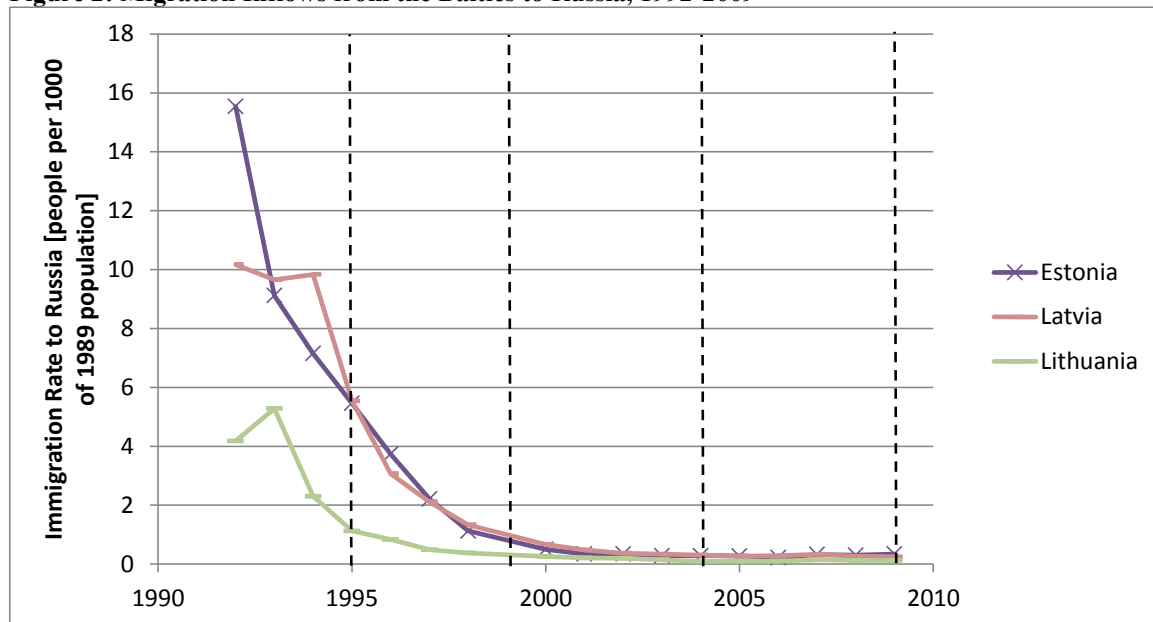
Figure 1: Migration Inflows from Central Asia to Russia, 1992-2009



Source: Russian Demographic Yearbook (Демографический Ежегодник России)

Although the Baltics were not directly addressed in his analysis, Korobkov's categorization fails to accurately describe migration trends from the Baltic countries to the Russian Federation. Although initial migration to Russia from independent Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was largely similar to Central Asia, migration rates from Lithuania were almost flat by 1996 and by 1999 from Latvia and Estonia and have remained flat since then, regardless of economic and political changes in those countries. Even the 2005 liberalization in Russian migration policies that Korobkov attests led to increases in some Central Asian migration did not seem to affect migration from the Baltic countries to Russia as depicted by Figure 2 below. There is clearly a divergence in migration behavior beginning around 1996 in certain regions of the former Soviet Union.

Figure 2: Migration Inflows from the Baltics to Russia, 1992-2009



b. The Case of Ethnic Russians

Ethnic Russians and other Slavic peoples fell into the category of migrants who left Central Asia and the Baltic countries after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. At the

time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, approximately 25 million ethnic Russians were culturally and ethnically displaced, living elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.⁹ Due to a myriad of factors, ethnic Russians and other ethnic minorities, especially those who used Russian as a language of interethnic communication, such as Koreans, Germans and Jews, were more likely than members of the titular nationality to migrate.¹⁰ Although the migration of ethnic Russians slowed by the mid-1990s, ethnic Russians still comprise a large portion of those migrating from Central Asia, especially those included in official statistics in migration inflows to Russia. This section of the paper will review migration statistics of ethnic Slavs and their motivation for migration decisions.

In Table 2 below there are data indicating the number of ethnic Russians and the percentage of ethnic Russian as a portion of the population in the Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as reported in the 1989 Soviet census. Russians comprised almost 38 percent of the population in Kazakhstan in 1989; 21.5 percent of Kyrgyzstan's population and 7.6 percent of Tajikistan in the last Soviet census. Ethnic Russians played an important role in political and economic life in these countries, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Many of the ethnic Russians lived in metropolitan areas and did not speak the local languages.¹¹ In Kazakhstan, ethnic Russians were employed in Soviet industries, such as the space or the defense industry.¹² Many schools and institutes

⁹ Hilary Pilkington, *Migration, Displacement and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 4.

¹⁰ Ibid, 13.

¹¹ Jacob M. Landau and Barbara Kellner-Heinele, *Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 186-187.

¹² Robert Greenall, "Russians Left Behind in Central Asia," BBC News, November 23, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4420922.stm>.

of higher learning offered instruction solely in Russian in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. However, due to perestroika in the 1980s, ethnic Russians' influence in political life in Central Asia had diminished.

Table 2: Russians in Central Asia, 1989			
	Russians (#)	Total Population 1989	Russians (%)
Kazakhstan	6,267,337	16,536,511	37.9
Kyrgyzstan	922,445	4,290,442	21.5
Tajikistan	388,251	5,108,576	7.6
Source: 1989 Soviet Union census (found online on the Universal Database of Russian Governmental Publications)			

In Table 3 below, the number of ethnic Russians and the population of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is presented, as reported in the 1989 Soviet census. Similar to in Kazakhstan, over 30 percent of Estonia's population was comprised of ethnic Russians. In Latvia, Russians made up 34 percent of the population. In Lithuania, 9.4 percent of the population was ethnic Russian. As in Central Asia, ethnic Russians were and remain concentrated in cities in the Baltic countries. Russians made up approximately half the population of Lithuania's capital Riga in 1989.

Table 3: Russians in the Baltics, 1989			
	Russians (#)	Total Population 1989	Russians (%)
Estonia	476,593	1,572,916	30.3
Latvia	911,210	2,680,029	34.0
Lithuania	346,839	3,689,779	9.4
Source: 1989 Soviet Union census (found online on the Universal Database of Russian Governmental Publications)			

Table 4: Emigration from the Main Slavic Groups from Central Asia, 1989-1995				
	Russians	Ukrainians	Belorussians	Total
Kazakhstan	614,000	82,000	16,000	712,000
Kyrgyzstan	296,000	39,000	3,000	338,000
Tajikistan	300,000	30,000	10,000	340,000
Source: Landau, <i>Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States</i> , 42				

Already late in the Soviet years, there was a backlash in some Soviet Republics against the Russian-centric Soviet identity. The titular nationality groups made a push to strengthen the titular identity through improving support for the titular language and encouraging nationalism. These social and political changes marginalized ethnic Russians and others who did not belong to the titular nationality and even led to fear.¹³ In addition to ethnic marginalization, ethnic Russians were often disempowered and lost key political and economic leadership positions during the transition to independence.¹⁴ Specific policies and political changes will be addressed in the chapters on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Another key factor in determining future migration is previous migration. Many of the ethnic Russians living outside Russia at the dissolution of the Soviet Union had migrated during Soviet times, therefore, this experience served as a proximate determinate of future migration. The newly-arrived had less of an attachment to their place of habitat and were likely to return to their titular homeland under the economic and political circumstances during the transition after the Soviet Union.¹⁵ Overall, the loss of social status and fear for future job stability, education opportunities for their children and economic and social marginalization caused ethnic Slavs and other groups to choose to migrate after independence.

As the ethnic Russians and other non-titular ethnic groups migrated from Central Asia, both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan attempted to stem the flow of outmigration to

¹³ Richard Luke Wolfel, Jr. "Mobility in Transition: Migration in the Former Soviet Union during an Era of Political and Economic Transformations" (PhD Diss., University of Indiana, 2001), 96.

¹⁴ Ibid, 97.

¹⁵ Ibid, 103.

prevent brain drain by altering language policy to be more favorable to Russian speakers.¹⁶ However, the outmigration of ethnic Russians constituted a significant portion of the migration from Central Asia to the Russian Federation.

In the table below, the number of Russians, the current population of the country and the percentage of ethnic Russians in Central Asia and the Baltic countries is listed. Between 1989 and 2009, Kazakhstan's population of ethnic Russians dropped from 37.9 percent of the population to 23.7 percent. Kyrgyzstan's ethnic Russian population decreased from 21.5 percent to 12.5 percent of the population. In Tajikistan, the percentage of ethnic Russians of the population fell from 7.6 to 1.1 percent. In the Baltic countries, the number of ethnic Russians also diminished, although not to the extent as in Central Asia with the exception of Lithuania. In Estonia in 1989 ethnic Russians made up 30.3 percent of the population and that fell to 25.6 percent in 2009. In 1989 Russians made up 34 percent of Latvia's population and in 2009 they made up 27.8 percent. Finally, Lithuania's 1989 population was comprised of 9.4 percent Russians whereas its 2009 population is comprised only of 4.9 percent ethnic Russians.

Table 5: Russians in Central Asia and the Baltics, 2009				
	Russians (#)	Total Population	Russians (%)	% Change from 1989
Kazakhstan	3,678,802	15,522,373	23.7	-40.9
Kyrgyzstan	698,430	5,587,443	12.5	-23.8
Tajikistan	82,362	7,487,489	1.1	-78.8
Estonia	328,439	1,282,963	25.6	-31.1
Latvia	612,909	2,204,708	27.8	-32.7
Lithuania	173,242	3,535,547	4.9	-50.1
Source: CIA World Factbook				

¹⁶ Landau, *Politics of Language*, 93-94.

2. Russia as a Migration Destination

Because the migration data used in this thesis is inflow data to the Russian Federation and migration flows within CIS are heavily directed toward Russia, the attractiveness of Russia as a migration destination is a factor worth examining. Government policy, the political environment and economic determinants are weighed and calculated in migration decisions. This section will assess Russian migration policy, the economic conditions in Russia and how destination factors unique to Russia affect migrants' decisions to migrate to Russia or to remain at home.

Migrants take both origin and destination factors into account when making a decision whether to migrate. In the period shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some of the factors that influenced these decisions included familial linkages to migrants who had already migrated or family living elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, geographic proximity to appealing migration destinations and the ability to cross borders due to a lack of policy hindrances.¹⁷ Origin and destination factors are asymmetrical according to Wolfel's analysis of Central Asian migration.¹⁸ He claims that the push factors alone may not be considered sufficient to migrate; often the pull factors from the destination are sufficient to make the decision to migrate. Often information about destination factors is spread by word of mouth and contacts that have already migrated, so sometimes this information is outdated or false. Regardless of the validity of information, political and economic circumstances at the destination greatly influence a potential migrant's migration decision.

¹⁷ Wolfel, "Mobility in Transition," 92.

¹⁸ Ibid, 153.

a. Economic Circumstances

The economic conditions in all of the former Soviet Union were dire following independence. There was a drastic drop in international trade with Central Asia in particular. From 1991 to 1993 there was a drop of 50 percent in trade to Kyrgyzstan.¹⁹ The economic conditions caused a shortage of job opportunities in Central Asia that led people to seek employment opportunities in Russia. Economic restructuring and high inflation caused overall disorder. For example, real GDP declined by 48.9 percent between 1990 and 1995 in Kazakhstan.²⁰ As indicated in Table 6 below, despite a negative GDP growth in Russia, its economic drop was comparatively less than elsewhere in Central Asia. By 1997, Russia's GDP began growing again; it already resumed growing in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1996, but the economic gains were slow. In these years, Russia would have been appealing because of its relative economic success compared to Central Asia.

Table 6: Real GDP growth (annual percent change) 1993-1999							
GDP growth	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Kazakhstan	-9.2	-12.6	-8.3	0.5	1.6	-1.9	2.7
Kyrgyzstan	-13	-19.8	-5.8	7.1	9.9	2.1	3.7
Tajikistan	-11.1	-21.4	-12.5	-4.4	1.7	5.3	3.7
Russia	-8.7	-12.7	-4.1	-3.6	1.4	-5.3	6.4
Source: The Asian Development Bank, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2010							

¹⁹ Wolfel, "Mobility in Transition," 102.

²⁰ "Kazakhstan Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 1997.

Table 7: Real GDP growth 2000-2008									
GDP growth	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Kazakhstan	9.8	13.5	9.8	9.3	9.6	9.7	10.7	8.9	3.2
Kyrgyzstan	5.4	5.3	0	7	7	-0.2	3.1	8.5	7.6
Tajikistan	8.3	10.2	9.1	10.2	10.6	6.7	7	7.8	7.9
Russia	10	5.1	4.7	7.3	7.2	6.4	8.2	8.5	5.2
Source: The Asian Development Bank, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2010									

The Russian economy in the early 1990s was characterized by privatization, the development of a market economy and chaos. In this transition, many people were rendered unemployed and plunged into poverty causing a spike in crime and corruption. Private property protection was and remains weak in Russia and private business is heavily regulated by the state. Although Russian GDP decreased in the early 1990s due to economic hardship and the loss of the former Soviet Republics, Russia's economy remained one of the largest in the world.²¹

Difficulties in implementation of fiscal reform and increased borrowing caused a financial crisis in 1998 in Russia. Hyperinflation and loss of international investment were some of the most serious consequences of this crisis. However, by the early 2000s, the Russian economy had stabilized, as a result of high global oil and gas prices. In the years of Putin's presidency, GDP per capita doubled and the Russian economy moved from being the 11th largest to the sixth largest in the world.²²

In considering how the economic situation in Russia could influence migration from the Central Asia and Baltic regions to Russia, various quantitative economic measures can be contrasted between countries in those regions. Looking first at gross

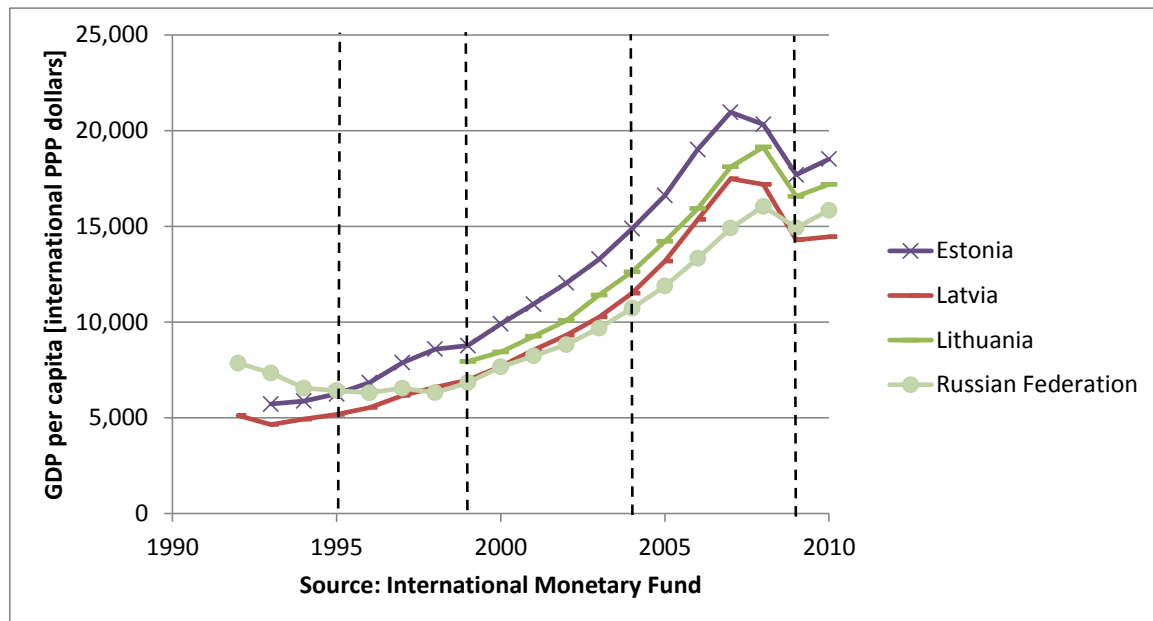
²¹ International Monetary Fund.

²² "Russia: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002.

domestic product (GDP) per capita (here in PPP terms²³), Russia and the Baltics have followed similar upward trends since the mid- to late-1990s, although Estonia has risen to the highest level among the group, exceeding \$18,500 PPP in 2010 while Russia stood at \$15,800 PPP. The economic problems in Russian in the first half of the 1990s are also reflected by the actual annual decrease in GDP that occurred in those years. This information is presented in Figure 3. The data is shown for Central Asia in Figure 4, where extremely stark contrasts can be observed. Although lagging behind Russia in absolute terms, Kazakhstan has boosted per capita GDP to nearly \$13,000 PPP. However, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have languished at hugely lower GDP rates near the \$2,000 PPP mark. In terms of PPP, Russia is comparatively better than the Central Asian countries. Thus based on an economic explanation for migration Russia is an attractive migration destination because of relative comparative wealth, although not as attractive from Kazakhstan as from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

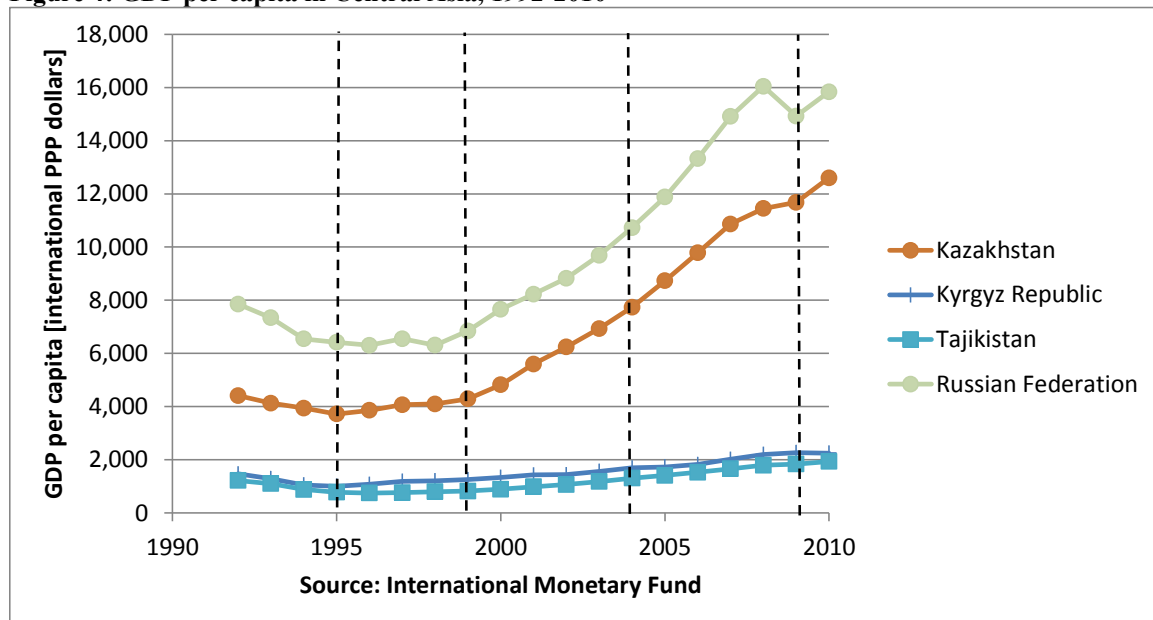
²³ PPP (purchasing power parity) meaning GDP values are equalized so that one currency unit represents equal buying power across countries rather than using raw exchange rates.

Figure 3: GDP per capita in the Baltic countries, 1992-2010



Note: No data available for Lithuania until 1998.

Figure 4: GDP per capita in Central Asia, 1992-2010



Although the trends in terms of wealth level are easier to see on plots of actual GDP per capita over time, economic performance can also be considered in terms of the GDP growth rate. This measure is more sensitive to particular annual influences; for

example in Figure 5, the Baltic countries and Russia showed large downturns in 2009 as a function of their connections to world trade and global economic hardships. The plot of GDP growth does show, however, that these countries have enjoyed positive and relatively high growth rates in almost every year for over a decade. Again, Russia's economic difficulties can be seen early on the graphed time period, where the Baltic countries got a head start on Russia in boosting their growth rates. Russia's growth lagged the Baltics until 1998 and shows a significant drop in growth in 1996 that affected Russia more than its Baltic neighbors.

The comparison to Central Asia is shown in Figure 6. Despite low total GDP seen in previous graphs, this plot shows that since the late 1990s, these countries have experienced relatively stable growth rates. Kyrgyzstan has had the most volatile and lowest overall trend in the growth rate. Despite the fact that the GDP growth rates in Russia and Central Asia look comparable in percentage terms in this figure, the actual resulting increase in wealth in the poor Central Asian nations has been small because of the lower overall GDP in those countries.

Figure 5: Annual GDP Growth in the Baltics, 1992-2010

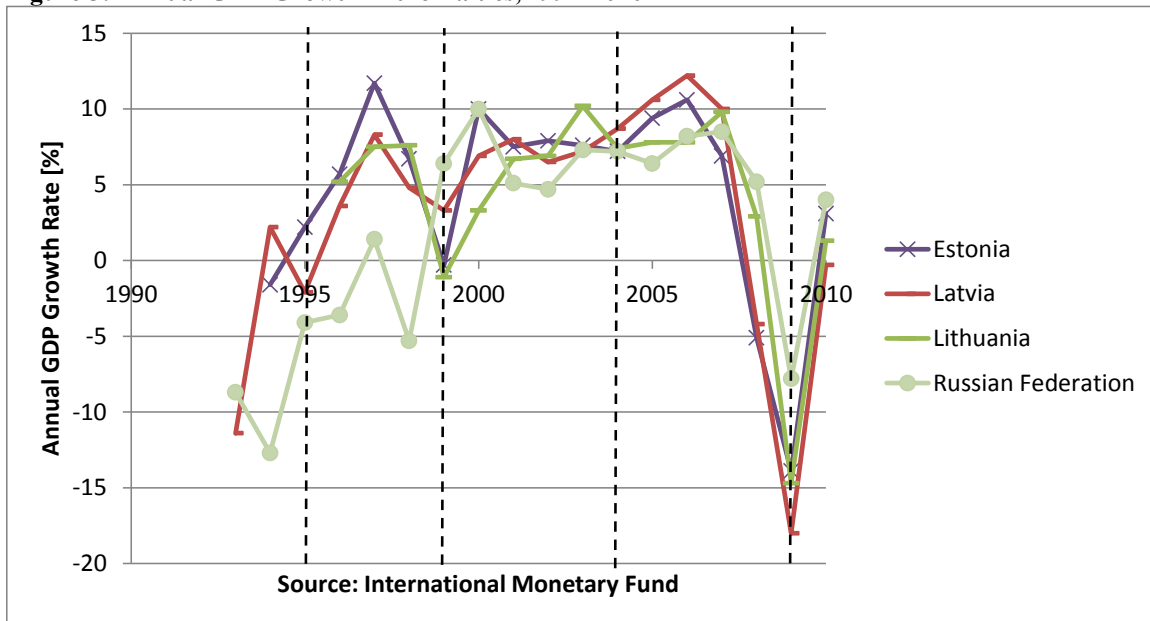
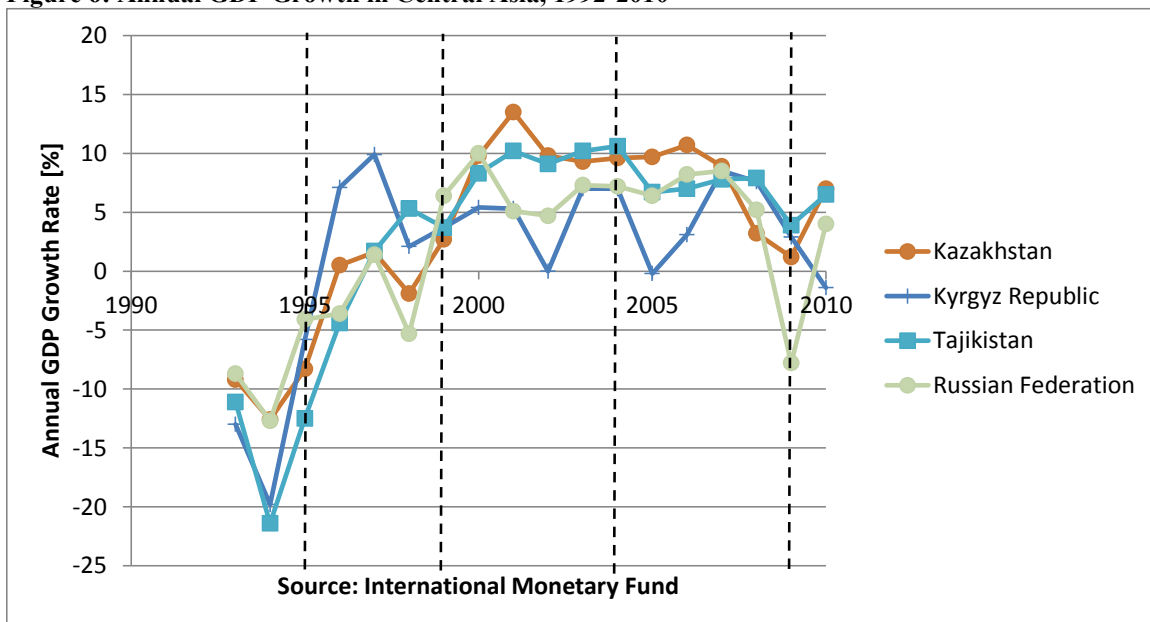


Figure 6: Annual GDP Growth in Central Asia, 1992-2010



A final economic measure for consideration is unemployment rates. The comparison between Russia and the Baltics is shown in Figure 7. Despite having richer economies, the Baltic countries also struggled to bring unemployment rates down to lower and more stable levels initially after independence. Since a major reversal in 1999,

Russia has generally maintained a downward trend in unemployment rates, which remained comparable to the Baltics until those countries experienced more severe spikes in 2009. Based on unemployment rates, Russia offers an advantage over the Baltic countries except for period two.

The World Bank and CIA World Factbook surmise that official unemployment data from Central Asia is starkly underestimated,²⁴ but the IMF compilation of official data is shown for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan alongside Russia in Figure 8. The data indicate that these countries have had unemployment rates along similar lines to Russia since 2002. The trend over the entire period for Kazakhstan more closely followed that of Russia, while the curve for Kyrgyzstan has been more flat. Since unemployment rates have been higher in Russia than in Kyrgyzstan based on this data, outmigration from these countries cannot be attributed to a lack of employment opportunities with the exception from Kazakhstan between the years 1994 and 2002.

These economic indicators can be used to compare the conditions for migrants. Although Russia's unemployment rate was lower than the rate in some of the Baltic countries and lower than all of them from 1999 until 2005, migrants chose not to migrate to Russia. Additionally, although GDP growth was consistently stronger in Kazakhstan than in Russia, migration from Kazakhstan was higher than from the other Central Asian Republics where GDP per capita was significantly lower than in Russia and in Kazakhstan. This migration from Kazakhstan is not consistent with economically motivated migration.

²⁴ "Tajikistan Background Notes 2011," US Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5775.htm>.

Figure 7: Official Unemployment Rates in the Baltic Countries

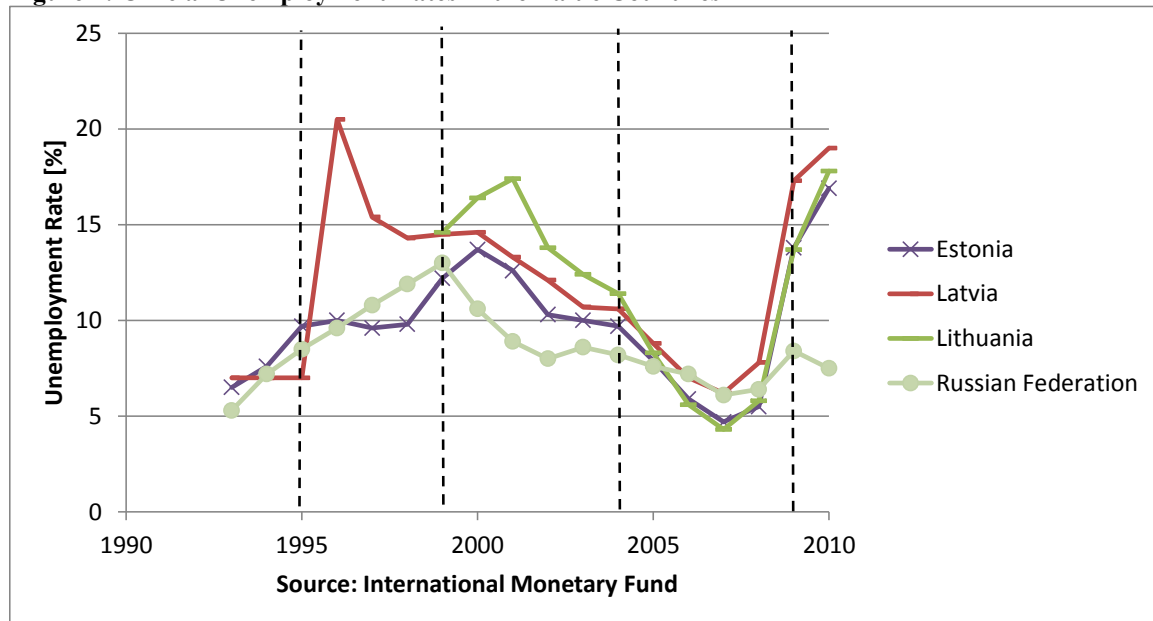
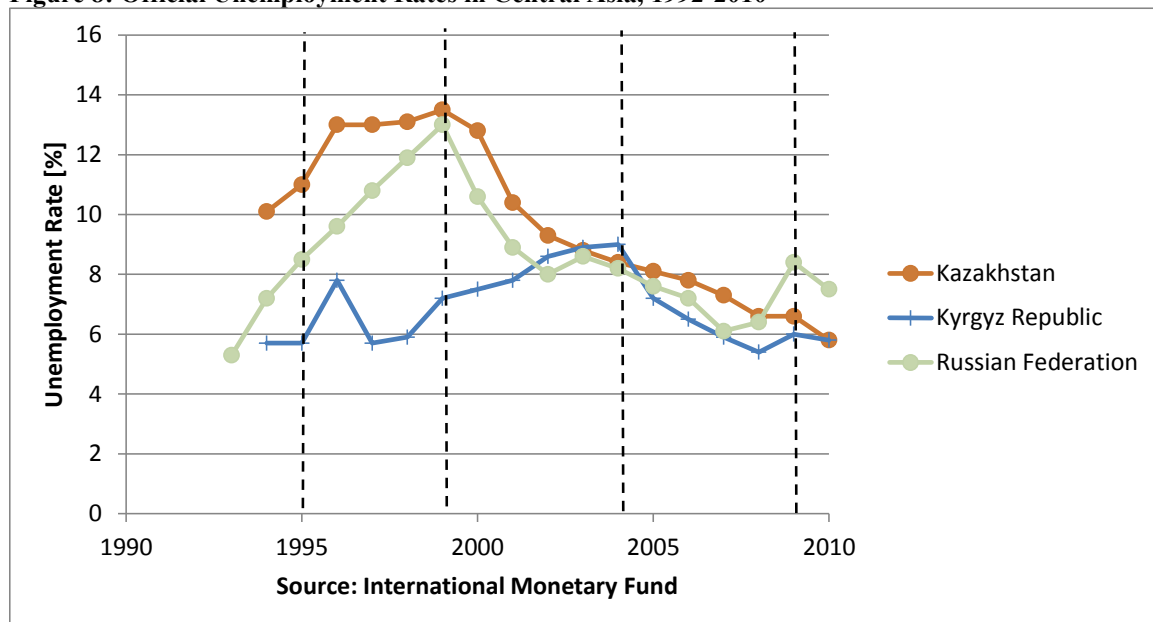


Figure 8: Official Unemployment Rates in Central Asia, 1992-2010



b. Migration Policy

This section describes various migration policy changes in Russia since 1991. The decentralized nature of the enforcement of Russian migration policy leads to varying

levels of enforcement.²⁵ Due to high levels of corruption, migration rules can often be disregarded or overlooked by local authorities if a bribe is paid. Because of corruption and varying levels of enforcement, migration policy in the Russian Federation appears to have a greater effect on the legality of migration, not the inflows to Russia.

Under Boris Yeltsin, the Russian administration did not devote noteworthy resources to the issue of the Russian Diaspora abroad and it did not try to make them a factor in Russian foreign policy. Moscow's goals for stability in Central Asia coincided with those of the regional leaders and thus did not try to support ethnic Russians in those countries. During the years Yeltsin was president, the administration was too distracted by other problems such as the conflict in Chechnya and the Caucasus, the civil war in Tajikistan and the fight for oil in the Caspian region to give migration policy much attention.²⁶

The Russian government in the Yeltsin era occasionally asserted that protecting the Russian Diaspora abroad was a foreign policy goal, but actions rarely matched this rhetoric. Although Moscow tried to pressure the Central Asian governments to allow dual citizenship with Russia, Turkmenistan was the only country to do so. Amidst the political and cultural changes after independence, ethnic Russians felt vulnerable especially due to perceptions of employment and education discrimination as Central Asia and the Baltics began to promote the titular cultures and languages at the expense of Russian.²⁷

²⁵ Light, Matthew, "Regional Migration Policies in Post-Soviet Russia" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2006), 133-134.

²⁶ Charles Ziegler, "The Russian Diaspora in Central Asia: Russian Compatriots and Moscow's Foreign Policy," *Demokratizatsiya* 14 (2006): 117.

²⁷ Ibid, 107.

Ethnic Russians were faced with the decision whether to accept the newly independent states and show loyalty to these new states and to maybe vocalize their complaints about ethnic discrimination and lobby to preserve their status in society or to leave the country for environments perceived as more welcoming. The choice to pledge political loyalty to a Central Asian state meant renouncing Russian citizenship, except in the case of Turkmenistan which recognized dual citizenship until 2003, and learning the titular language (less than one percent of ethnic Russians living in Central Asia knew the titular languages).²⁸ According to Charles Ziegler, many ethnic Russians were hesitant to accept the titular nationality as politically and culturally dominant after years of being carriers of the dominant language and culture in the Soviet Union.²⁹ Because of the authoritarian nature of Central Asian regimes and the hostility to civil society development, Russians were not remarkably effective at politically organizing in the newly independent Central Asian states. In the 1990s, official Russian migration policy neither encouraged ethnic Russians to migrate to Russia nor offered them incentives to migrate back.³⁰

In 1994 there was an attempt among the CIS members to regulate regional labor migration and protect migrants' rights. The Agreement on Cooperation in the Area of Labor Migration and Social Protection of Migrant Workers was signed in hopes of regulating migration procedures within the CIS. Underlying this agreement was the expectation that bilateral agreements on migrant quotas would be signed and appended as

²⁸ Ibid, 107-108.

²⁹ Ibid, 109.

³⁰ Ziegler, "The Russian Diaspora," 109.

needed. However, no such bilateral agreements were reached.³¹ In 1998 the CIS countries signed a second agreement that allowed information sharing between countries on labor migration, but it was never implemented due to a lack of databases and record keeping.³²

By 1999, Russia withdrew from the 1992 Bishkek Agreement that had established a visa-free migration regime amongst the signing states. Between 1998 and 2000, CIS countries limited visa-free movement between countries with bilateral agreements and undertook measures for stricter border control. Russia's 1999 Law on Compatriots Abroad stated that "compatriots are people born in one state who are living or who have lived in it, and who possess general familiarity with the language, religion, cultural inheritance, traditions and customs, and also direct descendants of such people."³³ However, migrants from CIS countries did not receive preference under this law.³⁴ Previously, citizens from CIS countries were permitted to seek employment opportunities while on a 90-day short term visa which could be renewed indefinitely by leaving the country and reentering, but under the new amendments, they were only permitted to visit Russia on this agreement. In 2002 Russia adopted the Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens on the Territory of the Russian Federation which increased bureaucratic hurdles to receiving a work permit and legal registration for migrants and their employers.

In 2002 policymakers in Russia restricted the ability of migrants from other post-Soviet countries to legally move to Russia and receive citizenship, which had been

³¹ Valery Tishkov, "Migration in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union," Global Commission on International Migration, (2005): 34.

³² Ibid, 25.

³³ Tishkov, "Migration in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union," 107-108.

³⁴ Ibid, 35.

significantly simpler in the early years after independence. Those migrants already residing in 2002 who had not yet received citizenship were also penalized and were often rendered stateless because they lost current legal rights to reside on the territory of the Russian Federation. Because of the bureaucratic hurdles that often require more than 90 days to complete and the expense of receiving work permits and registration, many migrants are forced to become illegal even if they enter Russia legally.³⁵ Although official records show that migration from Kazakhstan to Russia declined in the late 1990s, many believe that migration rates have not changed, but became illegal in nature.³⁶ The long shared border with Kazakhstan and difficulties in monitoring Russia's border helped sustain migration, although a discussion of legality of migration does not fall within the scope of this analysis.

Korobkov contends that the migrants entering Russia rarely stated their motivation for migration as ethnically motivated (such as due to language policy and social exclusion). In 1998, 13.6 percent of migrants said they migrated for ethnic consideration and only 5.2 percent in 2003.³⁷ However, based on data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Russia country profile in 2008, the migration from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was comprised not primarily of individuals from the titular majority between 2002 and 2006³⁸ (later data are not available) suggesting that migration was still ethnic in nature. Korobkov argues that by the fourth

³⁵ Ibid, 82-84.

³⁶ Light, "Regional Migration Policies," 88.

³⁷ Korobkov, "Migration Trends," 179.

³⁸ "Migration in the Russian Federation: A Country Report," International Organization for Migration, 2008, 31.

period in 2005, migration rates increased due to liberalization of migration policy by the Putin administration to encourage migration,³⁹ but while migration rates increase in the fourth period, they do not increase to the levels of period one or two suggesting that Russian Federation migration policy only moderately affects migration decisions.

Although migration policy was reportedly liberalized in 2005, migrants did not agree that procedures were simplified for them. In 2007 Il'sada from Kyrgyzstan stated, "I don't have a work permit. And I don't know how and where to get one. But I have registration (sic). Nobody told me to get a work permit, but I filed my residency registration myself. An acquaintance helped me."⁴⁰ Other migrants reported that their employers would not help them acquire a work permit although this is a procedure that was supposed to be simplified in 2007 and employers can be fined up to 800,000 Russian rubles if caught employing migrants without a valid work permit.⁴¹ In 2007 Muzafar from Tajikistan reported that "I have a work permit and an alien registration card. The owner of the house helped me. I worked without a work permit for the first four years, (sic) though."⁴² These statements support that migration procedures were not simplified and did not impact the decision to migrate.

The other half of the migration decision equation, after consideration of destination factors in Russia, is the economic and political factors in a potential migrant's country of origin, often referred to as push factors. The next chapters will discuss the

³⁹ Ibid, 178-180.

⁴⁰ Sergei Ryazantsev and Norio Horie "Central Asian Migrant Workers in Moscow: Realities Revealed by their Own Words," Discussion Paper Series Institute for Economic Research Hitotsubashi University, B:39, March 2011, 15.

⁴¹ "Migration in the Russian Federation: A Country Report," Human Rights Watch, 22.

⁴² Ryazantsev, "Central Asian Migrant Workers in Moscow," 17.

economic and political environments in the three Central Asian cases, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and for one case in the Baltics, Estonia.

3. Kazakhstan

a. Overview of Kazakhstan

This chapter presents an overview of the economic and political events in Kazakhstan and political measures in comparison with Russia that may have influenced migration decisions. Kazakhstan was the last Soviet Republic to declare independence on December 16, 1991. Overall, Kazakhstan is the most economically successful of the former Central Asian Republics. At the end of the Soviet Union, it also had the highest number of ethnic Russians. According to the CIA World Factbook, Kazakhstan's GDP was \$182 billion and the real GDP growth rate was 1.2 percent in 2010. The GDP per capita was estimated to be \$11,800 and in 2008 only 12.1 percent of Kazakhstan's population is believed to live below the poverty line.

The population of Kazakhstan in 2010 was estimated to be 15,522,373. According to the 1999 Kazakh census, the population is comprised of 53.4 percent Kazakhs, 30 percent Russians, 3.7 percent Ukrainians, 2.5 percent Uzbeks, 2.4 percent Germans, 1.7 percent Tatars, 1.4 percent Uyghurs and the remaining 4.9 percent are of other ethnicities. The most recent census in 2009 estimates that only 23.7 percent of Kazakhstan's population is made up of ethnic Russians, meaning that Kazakhstan has lost over six percent of its ethnic Russians since 1999. Kazakh is the state language of Kazakhstan although only 64.4 percent of the population speaks the language, according to the 1999 census. A reported 95 percent of the population know Russian which is an official language, designated the "language of interethnic communication".⁴³

⁴³ "Kazakhstan," CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html>.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev replaced ethnic Russian Gennady Kolbin in 1989 to become the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Kazakhstan. He initially opposed independence from the Soviet Union because of fear of retribution from Kazakhstan's large Russian minority. Nazarbayev won the first presidential election and has remained Kazakhstan's president since 1991. In 1993 the constitution was amended so the prime minister and Council of Ministers reported to the president. In 1993 the Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan dissolved itself and Nazarybayev ruled by executive decree. In 1995 Nazarbayev was reelected in a presidential poll and later that year, the constitution was revised based on a fraudulent referendum.⁴⁴ By the end of that year, no opposition parties were included in parliament anymore. A new constitution written in 1995 reinforced this relationship and solidified executive power. Nazarbayev maintained ethnic harmony in Kazakhstan in contrast to neighboring countries and oversaw an economic transition which increased his popularity in the early years of his presidency.⁴⁵

In late 1996, the language law was altered to give more rights to Russian speakers and stop the push for Kazakh language usage in public education. Despite this liberalization of the language law, immigration to Russia from Kazakhstan remained at a similar level from 1996-1999. The language law does not seem to have much impact on migration decisions. In March of 1997, the state oil ministry became Kazakh oil and Prime Minister Kazhegeldin warned that Kazakhstan was being ruled by oligarchs. He later mysteriously became ill and was replaced while out of the country.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ "Kazakhstan Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, November 1996, 4, 11.

⁴⁵ "Kazakhstan Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 1997.

⁴⁶ "Kazakhstan Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, February 1998, 21.

In 2009, Kazakhstan removed term limits for the president, allowing Nazarbayev to remain president for life. His party, Nur Otan, retains complete control over parliament.⁴⁷ In 2009 Nur Otan legislators called for a lifetime presidential term for Nazarbayev, but he refused (he can be reelected for seven-year terms without a term limitation). For a political party to be registered legally, it must have 50,000 members, an increase from 3,000 that was made law in 2002. To enter the parliament, a political party must receive seven percent of the vote. Because of these strict political party laws, Nur Otan currently has no opposition in parliament. Corruption is widespread within the government, security services, judicial system and in education. Cronyism is practiced for political appointments. The judicial branch does not function independently of the executive branch.⁴⁸

Although the constitution guarantees freedom of the media, independent media faced intimidation, arrests and harassment. Websites critical of the regime are frequently shut down or blocked. Laws passed in 2005 limited religious freedom, including banning any religious activity by unregistered groups and giving the authorities freedom to oversee religious activities and ban “extremist” groups. In principle, private property rights exist, but wealth is largely concentrated in the hands of certain clans and relatives loyal to Nazarbayev.⁴⁹

Kazakhstan faced economic hardships in the years following independence. In the early 1990s both the industrial and agricultural sectors, previously the largest employers

⁴⁷ “Political Background, Country Report: Kazakhstan,” Economist Intelligence Unit, 2008.

⁴⁸ “Kazakhstan: Freedom in the World,” Freedom House, 2011.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

in the country, lost part of their share of the labor force. In 1992 workers in industry made up 31.2 percent of the labor force and by 1997 made up only 20.7 percent. Agriculture made up 32 percent of the labor force in 1990, but only 21 percent in 1996.⁵⁰ Prior to independence, the Kazakh economy depended on Soviet subsidies to maintain competitiveness. These grants and subsidies amounted to 13.6 percent of Kazakh GDP in 1990 and the loss of these subsidies after independence substantially hurt independent Kazakhstan's economy. Kazakhstan had a large heavy industry sector that was largely no longer needed after independence.⁵¹

Kazakhstan's transition to a market economy was complicated by privatization efforts. Privatization of state assets was hindered by corruption and political infighting. However, Kazakhstan's new currency, the tenge, was introduced in 1994 and eventually helped to stabilize the economy, slow inflation and increase economic productivity, despite problems.

b. Political Situation: Authoritarian Regime Measures

This section includes various measures by non-governmental organizations that quantify the political factors that could have affected migration decisions in Kazakhstan. Freedom House, an NGO that advocates for political freedom, human rights and democracy, has produced an annual report called *Freedom in the World* since 1972. This report measures the state of political and civil liberties on a scale of one to seven, one being the most free and seven being the least free. Based on these scores, countries are designated as "free," "partly free," and "not free." The rankings are compiled from

⁵⁰ "Kazakhstan Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, February 1998, 12.

⁵¹ Ibid, 14.

various sources and to help ensure the report's validity, its methodology is regularly evaluated by an independent group.⁵²

In the latest *Freedom in the World* report on Kazakhstan in 2010, the country is considered “not free” due to a myriad of factors including corruption, cronyism within politics, lack of political variety, intimidation of journalists and obstacles to political party formation. Freedom House began ranking Kazakhstan in this report in 1992 and the country has been considered “unfree” since 1994. The graphs below highlight Kazakhstan, Russia and Estonia's scores in the various Freedom House measurements. Estonia is used as a comparison country to indicate the best case political scenario in the states of the former Soviet Union. Section 6 of this paper considers the political and economic situation in Estonia.

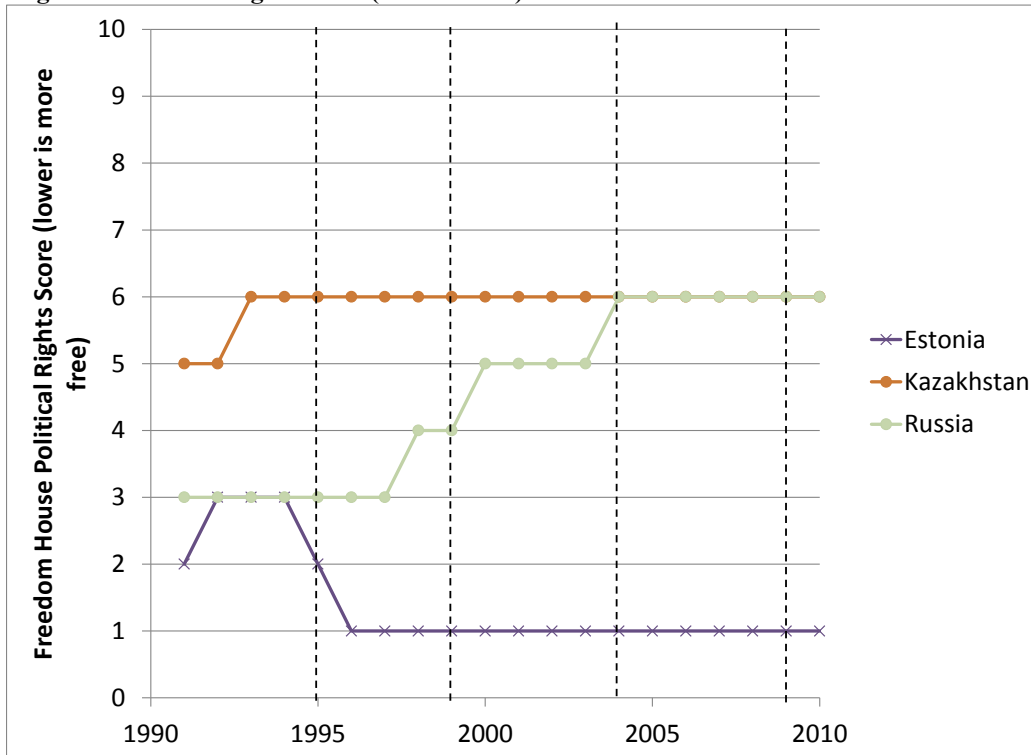
Freedom House political rights score for Kazakhstan, shown in Figure 9, has remained consistently poor over time. The political rights score takes political party development, independence of the branches of government, military influence on politics, ability of political opposition to function and environment for political discussions and gatherings.⁵³ This score can be contrasted with the score for Estonia which has remained excellent since shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia, also shown on the same figure, has become progressively politically less free over the same time period beginning around 1996. Russia had greater political rights than Kazakhstan in periods one and two; was slightly better in period three and equally bad in period four, thus minimizing political incentive to migrate from Kazakhstan to Russia by 2004. The greatest gap

⁵² Freedom in the World Report Methodology, http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=351&ana_page=354&year=2009.

⁵³ “Kazakhstan: Freedom in the World,” Freedom House, 2011.

between the two countries was in period two when Kazakh outmigration rates remained high indicating a political spur for migration.

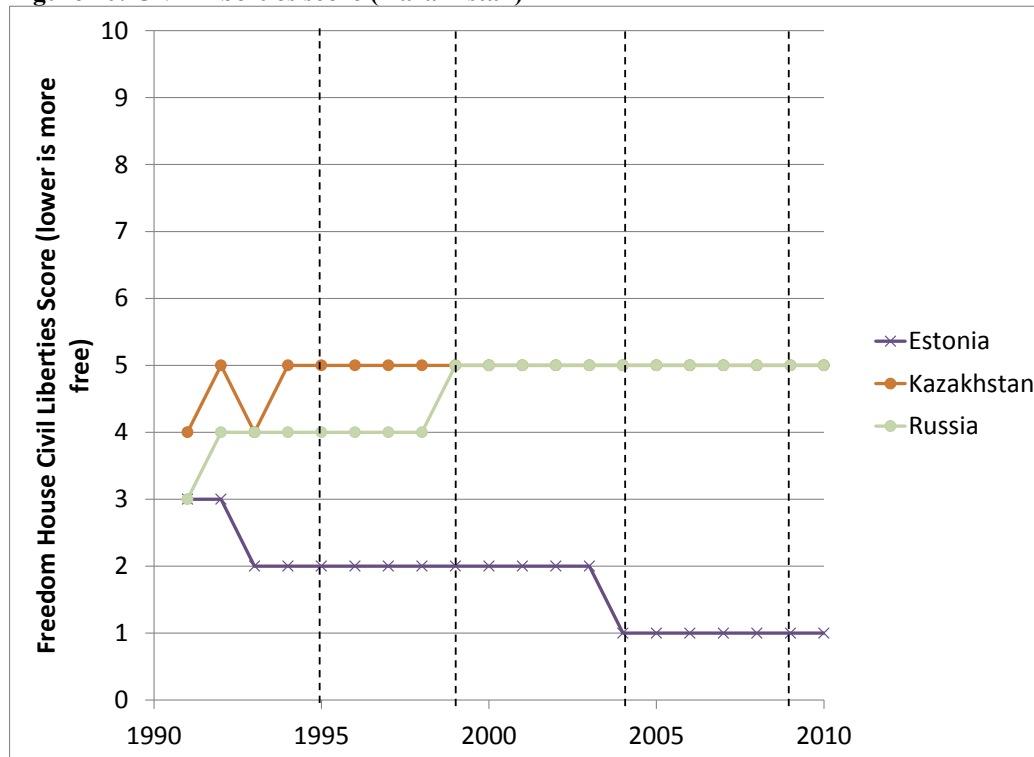
Figure 9: Political Rights score (Kazakhstan)



In Freedom House civil liberties measurements over the same period, shown in Figure 10 below, Estonia and Russia have diverged from parity in 1991 to follow different paths. The civil liberties measure a country's rule of law, freedom of economic activity and freedoms of expression, religion and assembly.⁵⁴ Estonia improved by two points in the measure while Russia's score became worse by two points. Kazakhstan and Russia have equally low scores by this measure, indicating an absence of civil liberties, although Russia's diminishing liberties makes Russia a less attractive destination for potential migrants later in the period whereas Kazakhstan offers stability in this regard.

⁵⁴ "Kazakhstan: Freedom in the World," Freedom House, 2011.

Figure 10: Civil Liberties score (Kazakhstan)



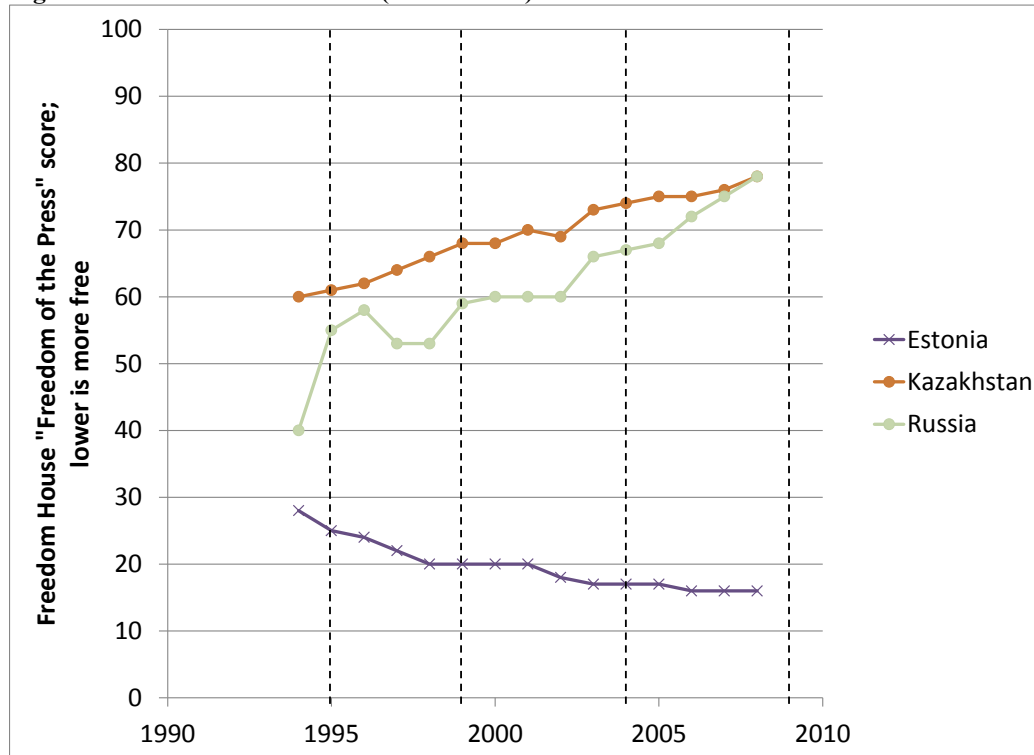
Freedom House also annually measures freedom of the press in the world. This survey assesses media independence in 186 countries and evaluates freedom in print media, broadcasts and the internet. Each country is given a numerical score and a ranking in a category of “free”, “partly free” or “not free”.⁵⁵ Estonia, Kazakhstan and Russia’s scores for freedom of the press have been depicted in Figure 11 from 1994 to 2008.

Estonia has gradually improved scores which were already comparable to other European democracies, while Russia, which in 1994 had a much freer press than Kazakhstan, has taken an opposite trajectory to Estonia. In 2008, Russian press freedom reached parity with the Kazakh press freedom. Previously, Kazakhstan had the least free press of these three countries and over time, it has gradually become less free. Freedom House cites

⁵⁵ “Freedom of the Press,” <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16>.

concerns for journalists' safety and self-censorship in Russia and Kazakhstan, as well as the government's control over the media environment.

Figure 11: Freedom of the Press (Kazakhstan)

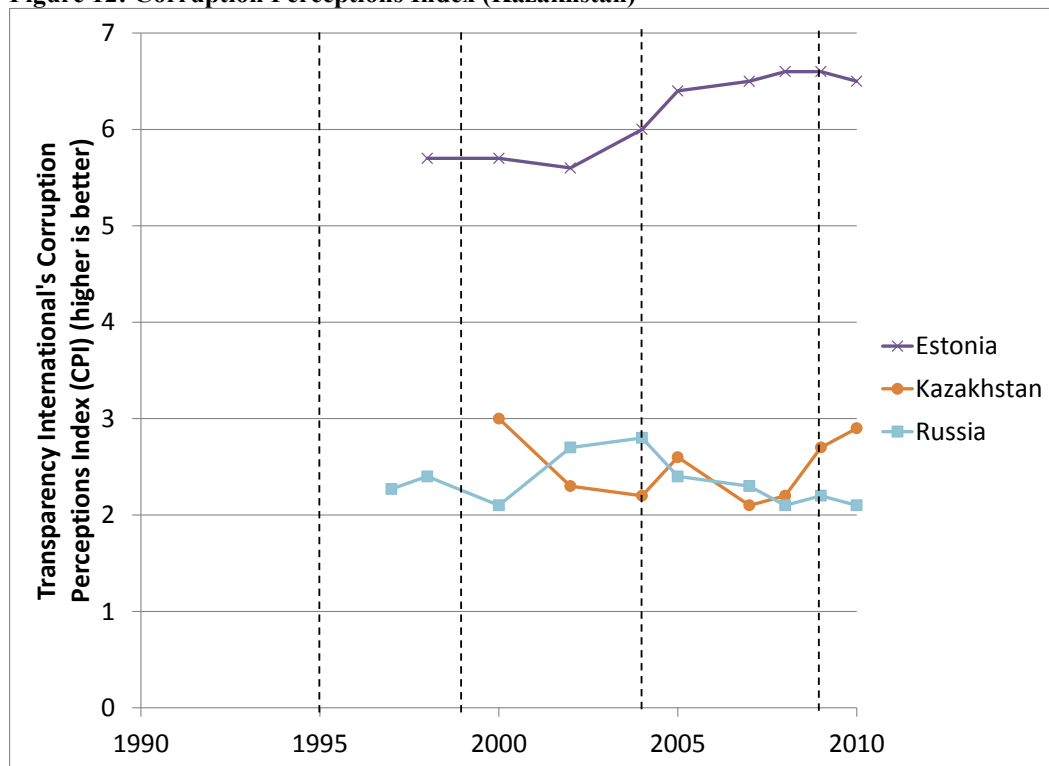


In another political measure, Transparency International calculates the perceived corruption in the public sector in 178 countries worldwide in its annual *Corruption Perceptions Index*. Transparency International defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”.⁵⁶ The index is calculated based on the results of 13 survey results on questions about political and administrative corruption in the public sector. The results from 1997 until 2010 for Kazakhstan, Russia and Estonia are pictured in Figure 12 below. With only small fluctuations over time, Russia and Kazakhstan have remained almost equal with high perceived public sector corruption, in contrast to Estonia with low perceived corruption.

⁵⁶ “Corruption Perceptions Index Report, 2010,” Transparency International, 2010.

The perceived public sector corruption, along with these various political measures, indicate that the political situation in Russia offered some respite for those migrants leaving Kazakhstan in the 1990s, when the press in Russia was considerably freer than that in Kazakhstan and overall, citizens had greater political rights. However, this situation worsened in the late 1990s and similar dismal political and civil liberties have converged in Kazakhstan and Russia.

Figure 12: Corruption Perceptions Index (Kazakhstan)



c. Language Policy and Ethnic Conflict

All five Central Asian Republics enacted some variant on language law declaring the local language to be the official language in 1989, a political policy that affected Russian speakers. Russian, however, remains widely used, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Bhavna Davé argues that the law in Kazakhstan was only decreed to silence

nationalists who wanted to demote the status of Russian.⁵⁷ Because the government was too fearful of upsetting both ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking Kazakhs, the law was created, but not strongly enforced. In practice Russian is still used in the public sphere, in business and in politics, especially in urban areas.

During the forced resettlement and urbanization of Kazakhstan in the 1920s and 1930s, almost 40 percent of the indigenous population perished. By 1954 under the rule of Nikita Khrushchev, millions of European Russians flowed into Kazakhstan and by 1959, 60 percent of the population was Slavic, Russian speakers.⁵⁸ Kazakhstan was the only Central Asian country to ever have a Slavic majority, so this legacy combined with geographic proximity to Russia, the development of education institutions in Russian and other factors has kept the usage of Russian high since Kazakhstan's independence compared to the other Central Asian Republics implying a more welcoming environment for Russian speakers.

In 1989, 64 percent of ethnic Kazakhs were fluent in Russian, while less than one percent of ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan were fluent in Kazakh. In comparison, in Kyrgyzstan in 1989, 37 percent of the population was fluent in Russian and 22 percent of Uzbekistan's population was fluent in Russian.⁵⁹ Davé contends the better the population spoke Russian, the worse they spoke the native language, a problem that was especially pronounced in Kazakhstan.⁶⁰ In 1989, it was estimated that 28 to 40 percent of Kazakhs

⁵⁷ Bhavna Davé, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 97.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 58.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 53.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 54.

did not have command of the Kazakh language and almost 75 percent of Kazakhs did not use Kazakh as their language of daily interaction, but rather used Russian.⁶¹ These numbers point to a greater need to educate the population in the local language in Kazakhstan than in other Central Asian states, where most of the population had command of the local language. This widespread usage of the Russian language also supports the idea that fewer ethnic Russians fled Kazakhstan because of animosity towards the Russian language, such as in the cases of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where language laws were strongly implemented against the use of Russian.

Although Kazakhstan declared Kazakh the only official language in 1989 and denied Russian status as an official language again in 1997's "Law of Languages," the political push for Kazakh language use is perceived by some Kazakh nationalists as symbolic and a political tool rather than something actively pursued by the citizenry of Kazakhstan.⁶² Daily language use in Kazakhstan on the whole remains unchanged. Politicians chose to promote Kazakh as a form of affirmative action, because Russian did not need any support; there is no punishment for use of Russian. Davé contends Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev keeps a moderate policy on language to help maintain ethnic relations.⁶³ There is little public debate in Kazakhstan on language laws and there is a noticeable gap between the laws and their implementation.

⁶¹ Davé, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power*, 55-60.

⁶² Ibid, 97.

⁶³ Ibid, 102-103.

Davé asserts Russian is still dominant because of Russian-speaking Kazakhs who do not sufficiently command Kazakh and not because of ethnic Russians.⁶⁴ There are neither Kazakh proficiency tests for government jobs or higher education, nor is responsibility to teach Kazakh on the state, but rather on the citizen. Citizens self-report on their language ability and thus, it is believed fewer Kazakhs have Kazakh proficiency than is actually reported.⁶⁵ Because of this reported self-compliance to the language law, the Kazakh government has no need to implement stricter policy or enforce the law.

In Kazakhstan, Kazakh is not needed to succeed in politics or business. In fact, Davé contends that the need for English skills is actually greater than Kazakh.⁶⁶ The Law on Languages silenced the debate on language policy because Kazakh nationalists were placated by the adoption of the law and Russian speakers were not threatened by it because full implementation was too costly initially and the political will to enforce it does not exist currently.⁶⁷ Moreover, the law appears democratic and liberal in promoting Kazakh language and identity on the part of the current government, but allows avoidance of debate on the topic. As an attempt to stem the outmigration of ethnic Russians, the Constitutional Court confirmed the equality of the Russian and Kazakh languages in 2007. However, in January of 2009, Kazakhstan decided to continue the practice of registering ethnicity in citizens' passports and some ethnic Russians complain

⁶⁴ Ibid, 53-54.

⁶⁵ Davé, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power*, 109.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 111.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 114-115.

of discriminatory practices in job hiring and education, indicating that ethnic Russians felt affected by changes in language policy, regardless of implementation.⁶⁸

In comparison to its Central Asian neighbors, Kazakhstan is relatively free of ethnic conflict. However, Kazakhstan is still considered authoritarian in politics, political party creation and freedom of the media by international watchdogs. For instance, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) concluded that the Kazakh presidential election in 2005 did not meet international democratic standards.

The trends in migration in Kazakhstan follow a similar pattern to the other Central Asian Republics in that in the first seven to eight years following independence migrations rates to the Russian Federation were high, especially among non-ethnic Kazakhs (see the changes in ethnic composition of Kazakhstan in section 1b). Although the political reasons for migration were not as pronounced as in Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan (which will be reviewed in the next two chapters), most people migrated primarily for political and ethnic reasons, which led to large outflows of ethnic Russians and other Slavic groups.

The major economic and political developments in Kazakhstan are listed in Table 8 below by period. Kazakhstan was economically better off than its neighbors Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, but still sent a higher rate of migrants to Russia in period two. This higher rate of migration supports politically-motivated migration since Russia still offered a political advantage during that period.

⁶⁸ "Kazakhstan: World Freedom Report," Freedom House, 2011.

Table 8: Migration, Political and Economic Developments in Kazakhstan				
	Period 1: 1991-1995	Period 2: 1996-1999	Period 3: 2000-2004	Period 4: 2005-2009
Migration Trends	15.31	13.51	4.15	2.66
Political Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decreasing political rights score/fluctuating civil rights score - Decreasing press freedom - 1993/95: power concentrated in executive branch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable political rights score - Decreasing press freedom - Russian language given almost equal rights to Kazakh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable political rights score - Russia meets Kazakhstan's low PR score - Decreasing press freedom - Corruption scores decrease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable political rights score - Decreasing press freedom - Russia's press freedom matches Kazakh. in 2007 - Corruption scores increase
Economic Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative economic growth - Industry/agri-cultural sectors lose share of labor force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1997: oil ministry privatized - Positive economic growth resumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unemployment rates consistently decreasing - GDP growth peaks in 2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP growth slows from previous period - GDP per capita increases

4. Kyrgyzstan

a. Overview of Kyrgyzstan

This chapter summarizes the economic and political events in Kyrgyzstan since independence as well as gives political measures for the country in comparison with Russia. Kyrgyzstan, or officially the Kyrgyz Republic, declared independence on August 31, 1991 and became fully independent on December 25, 1991. Kyrgyzstan is characterized by political problems similar to other Central Asian countries, such as an unfree press, undemocratic elections and hindrances to political party development, but it has also suffered from ethnic conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks and riots and uprisings that have unseated Presidents Askar Akayev and Kurmanbek Bakiyev in 2005 and 2010 respectively.

As estimated by the CIA World Factbook, the 2010 population of Kyrgyzstan was 5,587,443. According to the 1999 Kyrgyz census, the population was comprised of 63.9 percent ethnic Kyrgyz, 13.8 percent ethnic Uzbek, 12.5 percent ethnic Russian, 1 percent Dungans, Ukrainians and Uyghurs and 5.7 percent of other ethnicities. Kyrgyzstan is the second poorest of the Central Asian Republics, followed only by Tajikistan. The 2009 estimated GDP of Kyrgyzstan was \$12.09 billion with a 2.3 percent real growth rate in that year. The GDP per capita (PPP) in 2009 was estimated to be \$2,200. An estimated 40 percent of Kyrgyzstan's population lives below the poverty line.

Askar Akayev became president of Kyrgyzstan following independence in 1991. He remained in the post until March 2005 when protestors ousted him from office while protesting flawed parliamentary elections. In his years as president, Akayev consolidated power in the office of the president and elections in those years were criticized by

international observers as not meeting democratic standards.⁶⁹ Akayev marginalized potential political opponents. In the late 1990s, although Kyrgyzstan's economy had begun growing again, economic growth was a result of gold mining and agriculture and overall economic growth was slower than expected by the World Bank. Inflation rates increased in 1997-1999 because of the devaluation of the Kyrgyz currency (som) in relation to the Russian ruble and economic shocks from Russia's crisis reverberated in Kyrgyzstan such as an increased trade deficit due to higher than usual imports and slow export growth.⁷⁰

Although Akayev's reelection in December 2000 caused fear of ethnic conflict between ethnic Uzbek and Kyrgyz after militants from Uzbekistan entered Kyrgyzstan earlier in the year, no immediate conflict ensued. Following the election, there was a period of moderate GDP growth. An account deficit improved moderately since 1998. GDP growth slowed in the early 2000s to approximately four percent annual growth. In those years, inflation slowed dramatically. Akayev supported the global war on terrorism and permitted the American government access to airports on Kyrgyz territory beginning in 2001.⁷¹ In 2000-2001, certain sectors of Kyrgyzstan's economy improved, such as agriculture and gold, but overall, the industrial sector was plagued by a recession.

Following Akayev's ouster, Kurmanbek Bakiyev was elected president in July of 2005 after making a deal with his main opponent Feliks Kulov, who later came to oppose

⁶⁹ "Kyrgyzstan: Freedom in the World," Freedom House, 2010.

⁷⁰ "Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, October 1998, 3.

⁷¹ "Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, Jan. 2002, 3.

Bakiyev's presidency. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported that this election was an improvement from previous elections in Kyrgyzstan.⁷²

Bakiyev's security forces violently dispersed 2007 protests against the regime. In the following years, Bakiyev's party pushed through changes in parliament to concentrate and broaden his political power. Several opponents of Bakiyev were mysteriously killed. Corruption was and remains widespread in Kyrgyzstan and cronyism was practiced among the political elites. Bakiyev was reelected in July 2009 in what were deemed undemocratic elections by the OSCE. The following March, Bakiyev fled Kyrgyzstan amidst widespread protests. In June 2010 Kyrgyzstan adopted a new constitution that allowed for free, multiparty parliamentary elections under interim President Roza Otunbayeva. This constitution also aimed to balance power between the branches of government and to rid Kyrgyzstan of the all-powerful executive branch. Freedom House criticized the business environment in Kyrgyzstan describing corruption, personal connections, and widespread poverty as hindrances to equality of opportunity. Although Kyrgyz citizens can freely migrate internationally, a strict registration system remains in place hindering internal migration opportunities.⁷³

b. Political Situation: Authoritarian Regime Measures

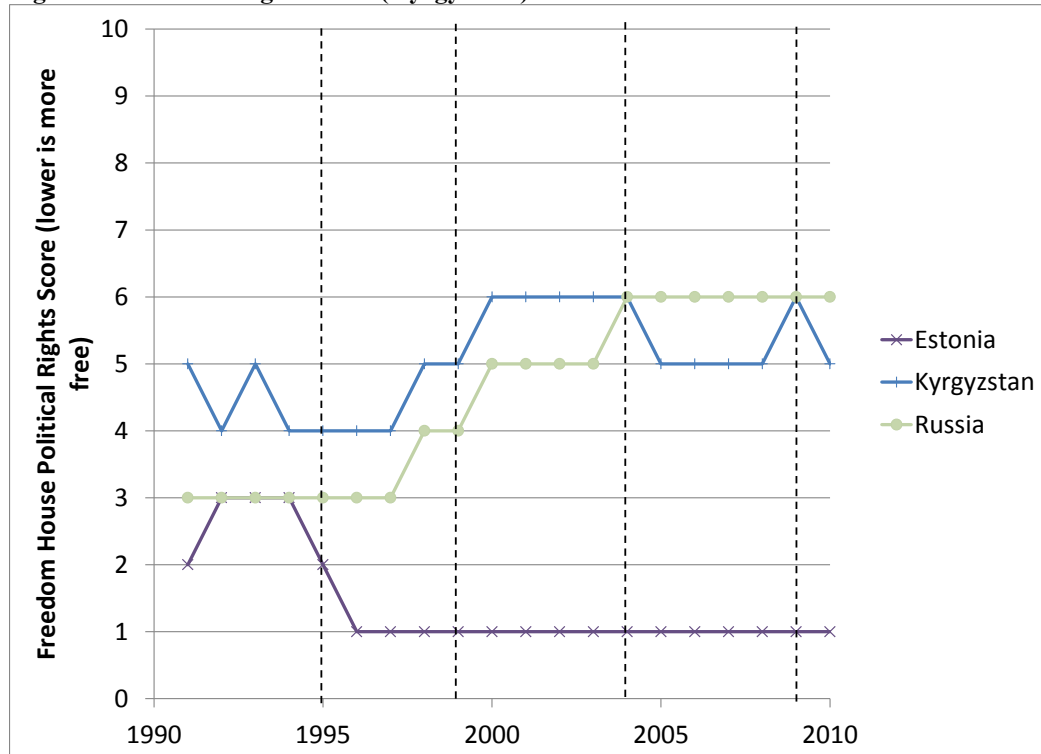
The following section reviews political factors in Kyrgyzstan. In Figure 13 below, the political liberties scores for Kyrgyzstan and Russia are contrasted with Estonia's scores. In 1991, Russia's scores were two points higher than Kyrgyzstan's scores and were better in periods one and two. Kyrgyzstan's score improved somewhat in period

⁷² "Kyrgyzstan: Freedom in the World," Freedom House, 2011.

⁷³ Ibid.

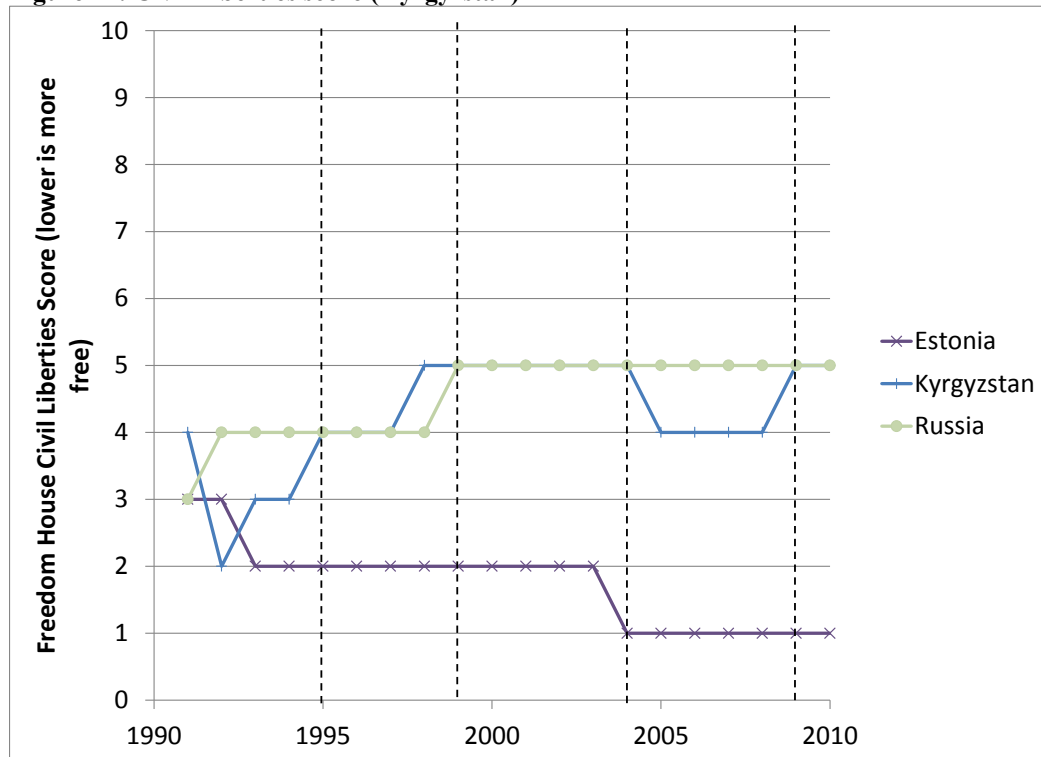
four and held steady until 2010 when it improved slightly. Kyrgyzstan's scores remained generally worse than Russia's until 2004 when Russia's ranking worsened indicating a political motivation to migrate to Russia from Kyrgyzstan until 2005.

Figure 13: Political Rights score (Kyrgyzstan)



Similarly, civil liberties scores for Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Estonia were relatively similar in 1991 (Figure 14 below). In contrast, Russia's score consistently declined until 1999 and then stabilized. Kyrgyzstan's score fluctuated over time mirroring political events in the country. However, in the most recent assessment Kyrgyzstan's score improved and the country was re-categorized as "partly free" after the adoption of a new constitution in 2010. However, Russia maintained an advantage over Kyrgyzstan in this regard until period four.

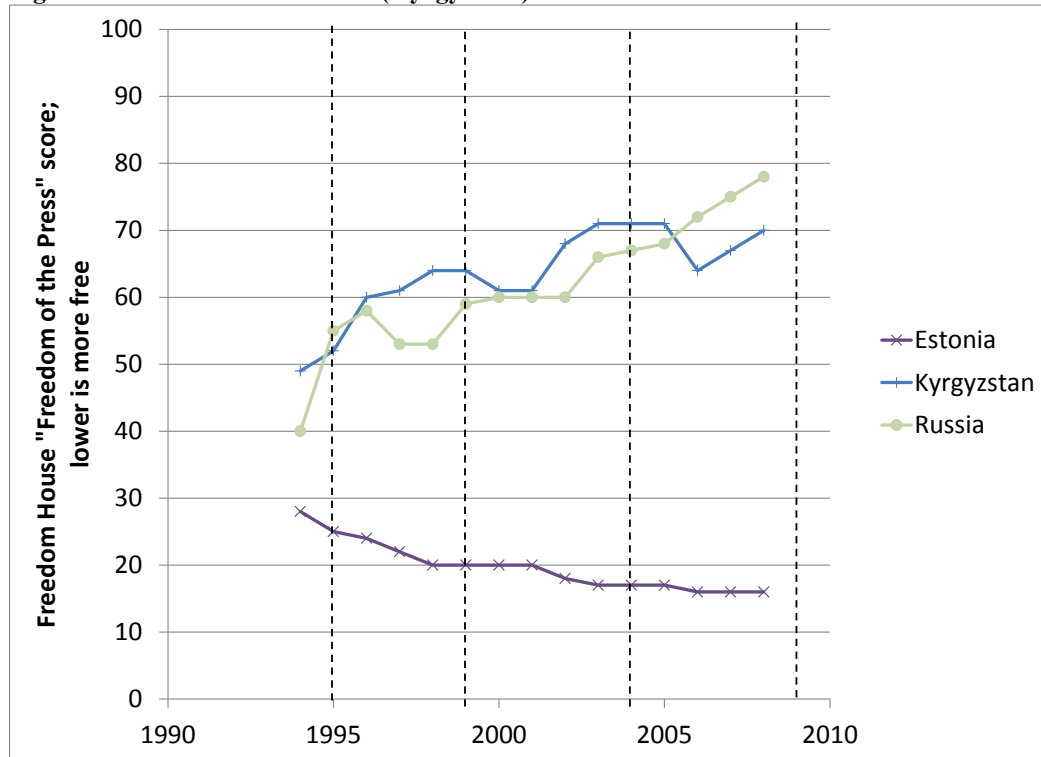
Figure 14: Civil Liberties score (Kyrgyzstan)



According to Freedom House's *Freedom of the Media* assessment, the media situation in Russia and Kyrgyzstan has worsened over time, shown in Figure 15 below. In Kyrgyzstan, the situation has had greater fluctuations with periods of improvement such as in 2005 when Bakiyev became president, whereas Russia's score only had a period of improvement from 1996 to 1998. Russia's media climate was initially freer than Kyrgyzstan, but has fallen from a score of 40 to 78 between 1992 and 2008 (the latest available assessment). Kyrgyzstan's score has fallen from 49 to 70. Journalists in Kyrgyzstan, such as independent newspaper editor Cholpon Orozobekova in 2008, have been forced to migrate and seek asylum outside of Kyrgyzstan because of the restrictions on the media. She was the ninth Kyrgyz journalist or human rights activist to flee

Kyrgyzstan in 2007 and 2008 because of threats, violence and dubious criminal charges.⁷⁴

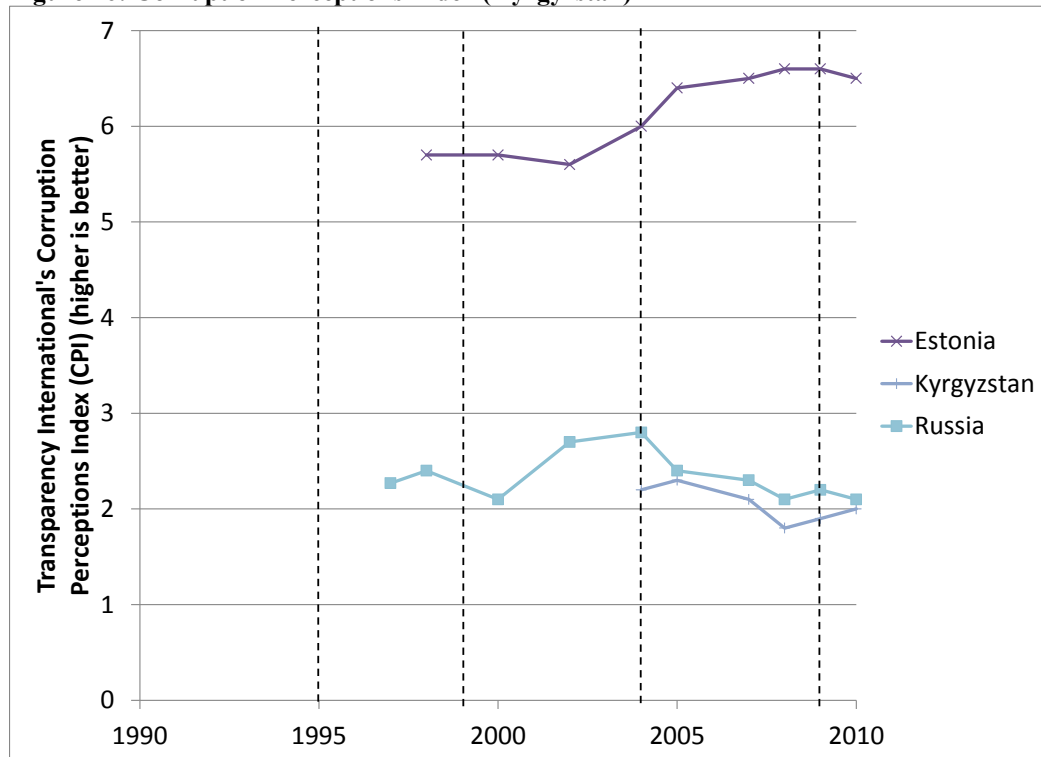
Figure 15: Freedom of the Press (Kyrgyzstan)



Kyrgyzstan is one of the top twenty countries in the world with the highest perceived corruption in the public sector as measured annually with surveys by Berlin-based non-governmental organization Transparency International. The data from 1996 until 2010 (Kyrgyzstan was only included in the survey beginning in 2004) is shown in Figure 16 below. Kyrgyzstan and Russia's levels of perceived corruption have somewhat increased and they are consistently ranked as countries with high perceived levels of corruption. The situation in Kyrgyzstan is broadly similar to in Kazakhstan.

⁷⁴ Djumataeva, Venera, "Kyrgyz Editor Seeks Political Asylum in Europe," RFE/RL, Dec 17, 2008, http://www.rferl.org/content/Kyrgyz_Editor_Seeking_Asylum_In_Europe_The_Ninth_In_Past_Two_Years/1360715.html.

Figure 16: Corruption Perceptions Index (Kyrgyzstan)



c. Language Policy and Ethnic Conflict

Prior to 1989, only one of 73 schools in Bishkek used Kyrgyz as the primary language of instruction. Since then, the number of Russian schools has decreased by 39.3 percent, especially in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz is a compulsory subject in all schools.⁷⁵ The Language Law of 1989 declared Kyrgyz the official language of Kyrgyzstan, and although the number of Russian schools has decreased, Russian and Uzbek-language schools continue to function. In the south of Kyrgyzstan, the population is up to 25 percent Uzbek and therefore, some schools in that region use Uzbek as the primary language. Similarly, the ethnic Russian population remains concentrated in the

⁷⁵ Baktygul Ismailova, "Socio-cultural, Economic and Political Influences on Choice of Medium of Instruction: The Case of Kyrgyzstan," (PhD diss., Queen's University at Kingston, 2006), 17-18.

cities, especially Bishkek, and schools are allowed to choose their language of instruction, hence the remaining Russian schools.⁷⁶

By 2000, due to fears of complete outmigration of ethnic Russians and other Slavic groups and because the elite spoke Russian, Kyrgyzstan gave the Russian language the status of an official language again. Kyrgyz politicians realized they needed to maintain Russian to stay on friendly terms with Moscow, to communicate with their neighbors and to socially include Russians in Kyrgyz society.⁷⁷ However, they did not give the Uzbek language a similar bump in status, despite a large Uzbek minority in the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan.

Multiethnic Kyrgyzstan has been plagued with political and ethnic conflict. During the riots of 1990, 120 Uzbeks and 50 Kyrgyz were killed and Mikhail Gorbachev was compelled to call in the Red Army to intervene and enforce peace.⁷⁸ Ethnic conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks seems to simmer below the surface constantly in southern Kyrgyzstan threatening to erupt as it did in 1990 and again in 2010.

The 2005 Tulip Revolution overthrew President Askar Akayev and Kurmanbek Bakiyev became president in July of 2005. Major opposition protests against Bakiyev began and lasted throughout 2006. A new constitution signed in November of 2006 attempted to balance power better between the executive and legislative branches. However, by the end of 2006, the parliament added amendments to the new constitution

⁷⁶ Ismailova, "Socio-cultural, Economic and Political Influences," 71.

⁷⁷ Michele Commercio, "Exit in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51:6, Nov/Dec 2004, 25.

⁷⁸ "Soviets Intervene in Ethnic Violence," Associated Press, June 11, 1990, www.nytimes.com/1990/06/11/world/evolution-in-europe-soviets-intervene-in-ethnic-violence.html.

that allowed the president to retain broader executive power, thus rendering the new constitution moot.⁷⁹

Bakiyev was overthrown in political rioting in 2010 and replaced with interim president Roza Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister. After the April 2010 revolution, ethnic conflict broke out in southern Kyrgyzstan between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks. Although not included in the scope of this paper, the political uncertainty likely led to higher migration rates during this time.

Shortly after independence, Kyrgyzstan displayed many similarities to Kazakhstan in migration patterns due to their large populations of Europeans.⁸⁰ The noteworthy political and economic changes in Kyrgyzstan are listed by migration period in Table 9 below. The higher migration rate in period four and the worsening economic situation combined with an unstable political situation under Bakiyev suggest that this migration could be politically or economically motivated. However, in the initial period, Russia offered an attractive political alternative suggesting that some of this migration was motivated by political and ethnic factors at the origin and destination. Similar to Kazakhstan, the 2008 IOM report on Russia gives information on the ethnic composition of migration and the majority of migrants from Kyrgyzstan from 2002-2006 were not ethnic Kyrgyz, supporting that this migration was political.

⁷⁹ "Kyrgyzstan: Freedom in the World," Freedom House, 2006.

⁸⁰ Wolfel, "Mobility in Transition," 90.

Table 9: Migration, Political and Economic Developments in Kyrgyzstan				
	Period 1: 1991-1995	Period 2: 1996-1999	Period 3: 2000-2004	Period 4: 2005-2009
Migration Trends	14.12	3.10	2.25	3.92
Political Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political rights score fluctuates - Civil liberties scores decrease - Freedom of the press worsens - Russia politically better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political rights scores decrease 1998-2000 - Civil liberties scores decrease through 1998 - Russia retains political advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political rights scores stabilize - Civil liberties scores stabilize - Improves compared to Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Akayev overthrown in Tulip Revolution - Bakiyev elected - Political rights scores fluctuate - Better than Russia politically
Economic Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP growth negative - Worse off than Russia and Kazakhstan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP growth resumes - Unemployment rates increase - High inflation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP growth fluctuates - GDP per capita increases slightly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP increases and then decreases - GDP still lower than in Russia

5. Tajikistan

a. Overview of Tajikistan

The next chapter presents a summary of the economic and political events in Tajikistan that may have influenced migration, as well as presenting political measures for comparison with Russia. Tajikistan declared independence from the Soviet Union on September 9, 1991, and became an independent country on December 26, 1991. In comparison with the other countries of the former Soviet Union, Tajikistan is the largest labor exporter as a percentage of its population. Tajikistan, after suddenly becoming independent in 1991 like the other former countries of the Soviet Union, was barely able to create a Tajik state. Then the country erupted into a violent civil war between the United Tajik Opposition and the government and its supporters that lasted until 1997. The fighting took place in the southern part of the country and in Dushanbe. During this period, consumer prices jumped, but later stabilized due to the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). GDP levels in 1996 were almost half of their 1989 rates. Unemployment, like elsewhere in Central Asia, plagued Tajikistan.⁸¹ It is estimated that 50,000 to 100,000 people died during the civil war and over a million others were displaced either internally in Tajikistan or as refugees in neighboring countries. By 1997, Tajikistan's economy and infrastructure were in shambles.

Tajikistan remains the poorest of the Central Asian Republics. Its estimated GDP in 2009 was \$13.65 billion and the GDP real growth rate was 3.4 percent. In that year, GDP per capita (PPP) was estimated to be \$1,900. According to the CIA World Factbook, approximately 53 percent of Tajikistan's population lives under the poverty

⁸¹ Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Keeping Central Asia Stable" *Third World Quarterly* 25 (2004): 694-695.

line. The 2010 estimated population of Tajikistan is 7,487,489. According to the 2000 Tajikistan census, the population is comprised of 79.9 percent Tajiks, 15.3 percent Uzbeks, 1.1 percent Russians, 1.1 percent Kyrgyz and the remaining 2.6 percent are of other ethnicities. Tajik is the official language of the country, but Russian is widely used in government, business and higher education.

Emomali Rahmonov (who de-Russified his surname “Rahmon” in 2007) was elected president of Tajikistan in 1994 at the end of the violent period of the devastating civil war, when Tajikistan was in ruins. Rahmon negotiated a ceasefire between opposition groups in 1997. He was reelected in 1999, although the elections were criticized by international observers. Rahmon’s political party, the People’s Democratic Party of Tajikistan, holds a majority in the parliament.

After a 2003 constitutional referendum, Rahmon was permitted to stay in the post of president until 2020. He was reelected again in 2006. These elections were considered non-democratic by Western observers. The winter of 2007/2008 was characterized by food and electricity shortages so severe that the UN eventually stepped in to assist. In 2007 Tajikistan was also plagued by high inflation. For example, in that year the cost of wheat increased by 70 percent.⁸²

Economic performance and fiscal reform in 1998-2000 was weak due to low tax revenue and high inflation rates. In these years, low global commodity prices caused an increase in Tajikistan’s trade deficit.⁸³ From 2000-2003 the regime silenced dissent and the economy’s growth slowed due to industrial restructuring and land reform. By 2003,

⁸² “Tajikistan: Severe Winter Weather Means Looming Pestilence and Hunger,” EurasiaNet, February 19, 2008, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav022008b.shtml>.

⁸³ “Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan: Country Report,” Economist Intelligence Unit, October 1998, 3.

inflation was down to 14 percent. Unemployment rose after early 2001 and reached an estimated 25 percent of the labor force by the end of 2001.

Opponents of the president are often harassed or imprisoned. Family members of Rahmon are greatly influential in business in Tajikistan, a result of the power of patronage networks in the country.⁸⁴ Despite a guarantee of freedom of the press, independent media outlets are limited and criticism of the government is rarely published. Corruption is pervasive in the government, security services and in education. Certain websites critical of the regime are blocked. The regime is known to ban or block public gatherings or protest.⁸⁵ Although some opposition groups are allowed to operate in Tajikistan, they face harassment and receive little media coverage as most of Tajikistan's media is controlled by the state. In the name of fighting terrorism, Rahmon has restricted rights of religious groups and banned those deemed extremist.⁸⁶

b. Political Situation: Authoritarian Regime Measures

The next section reviews political trends in Tajikistan since independence. According to Freedom House assessments on Freedom in the World, Tajikistan is categorized as "unfree". Shown in Figure 17 below, political rights in Tajikistan were ranked considerably lower than in Russia and Estonia. Russia's score in political liberties has consistently worsened. The situation for civil liberties in Tajikistan, shown below in Figure 18, has followed a similar trajectory. In scores for political and civil liberties in periods one and two, Tajikistan was assessed as significantly worse than Russia, but since

⁸⁴ "Tajikistan: Freedom in the World," Freedom House, 2011.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ "Tajikistan: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011.

2002 for political liberties and 2004 for civil liberties, Russia no longer offers a political advantage for migrants. The political gap between Russia and Tajikistan in period two was the greatest of all the Central Asian countries. Although the general migration rate does not reflect this, the migration rate with the ethnic Russian population as a base is the highest of all the countries in period two (see Table 13: Migration rates based on ethnic Russian population, 1989 in the conclusion) indicating politically motivated migration.

Figure 17: Political Rights score (Tajikistan)

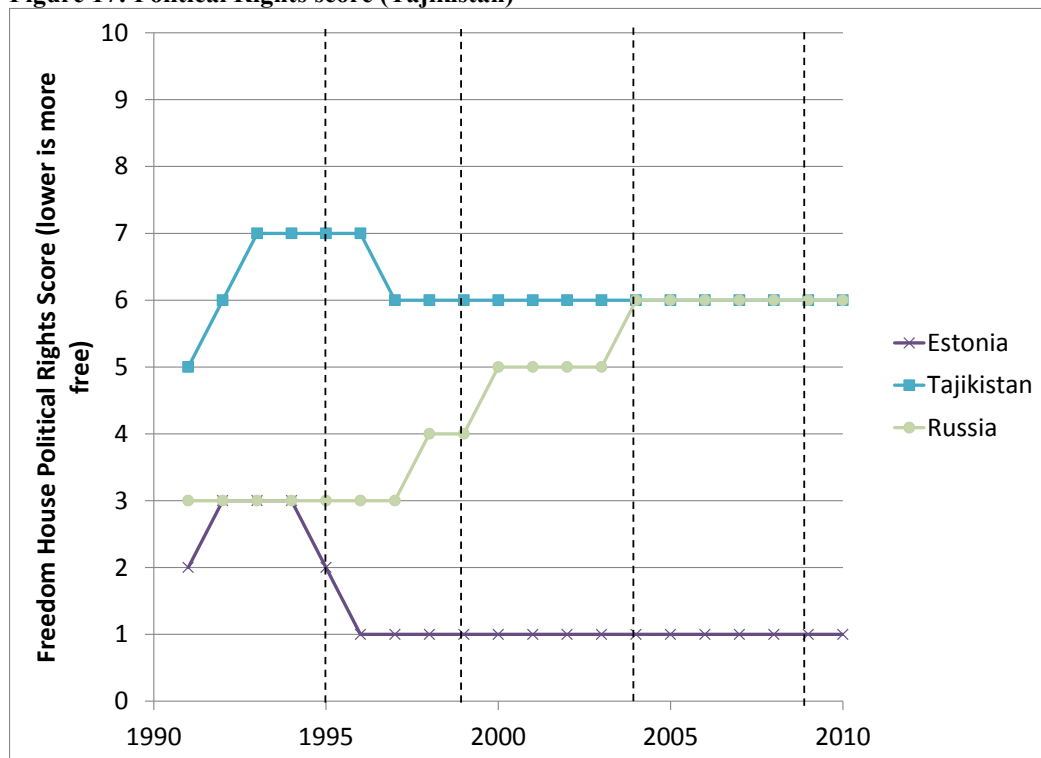


Figure 18: Civil Liberties score (Tajikistan)

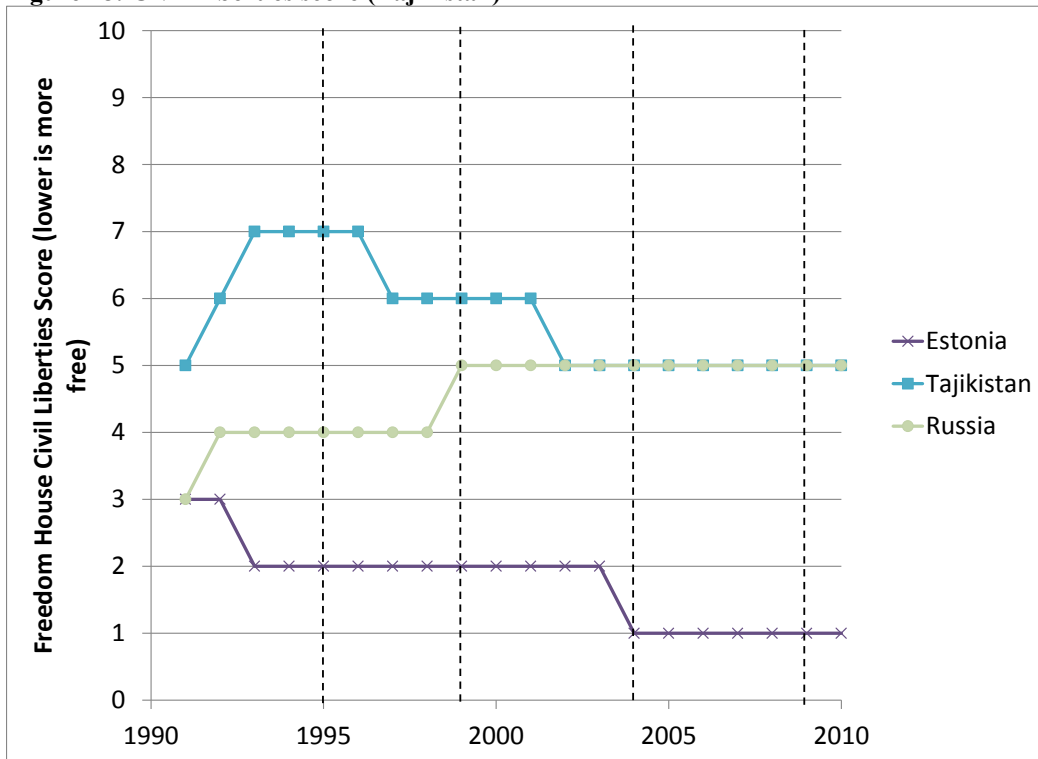
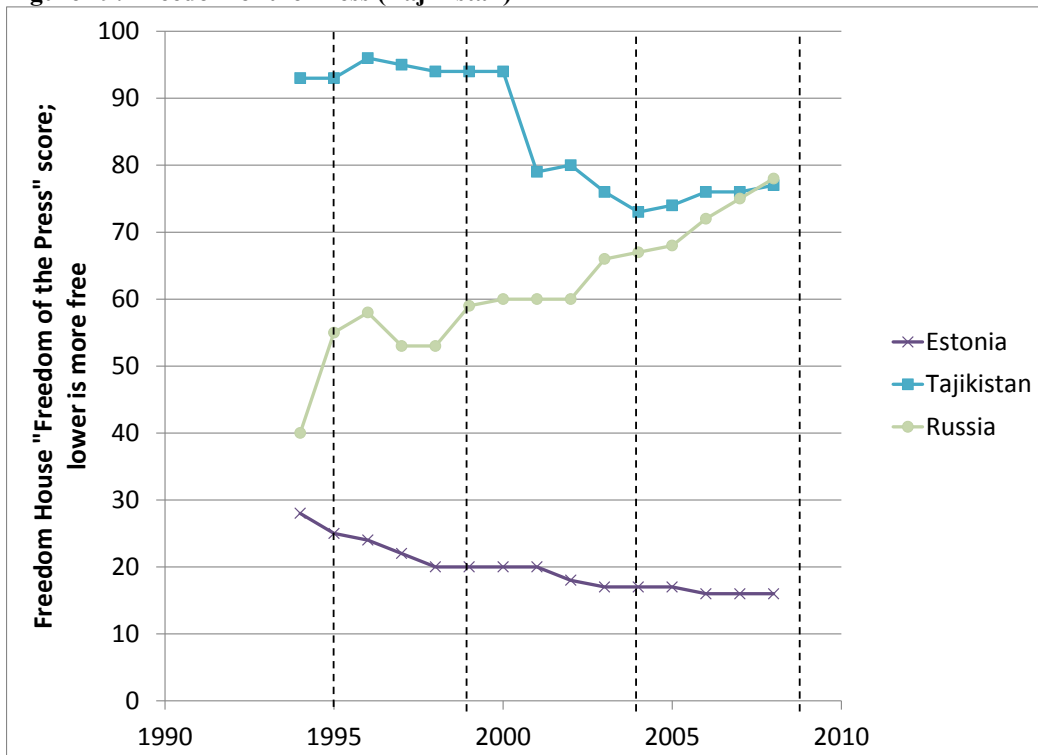


Figure 19: Freedom of the Press (Tajikistan)



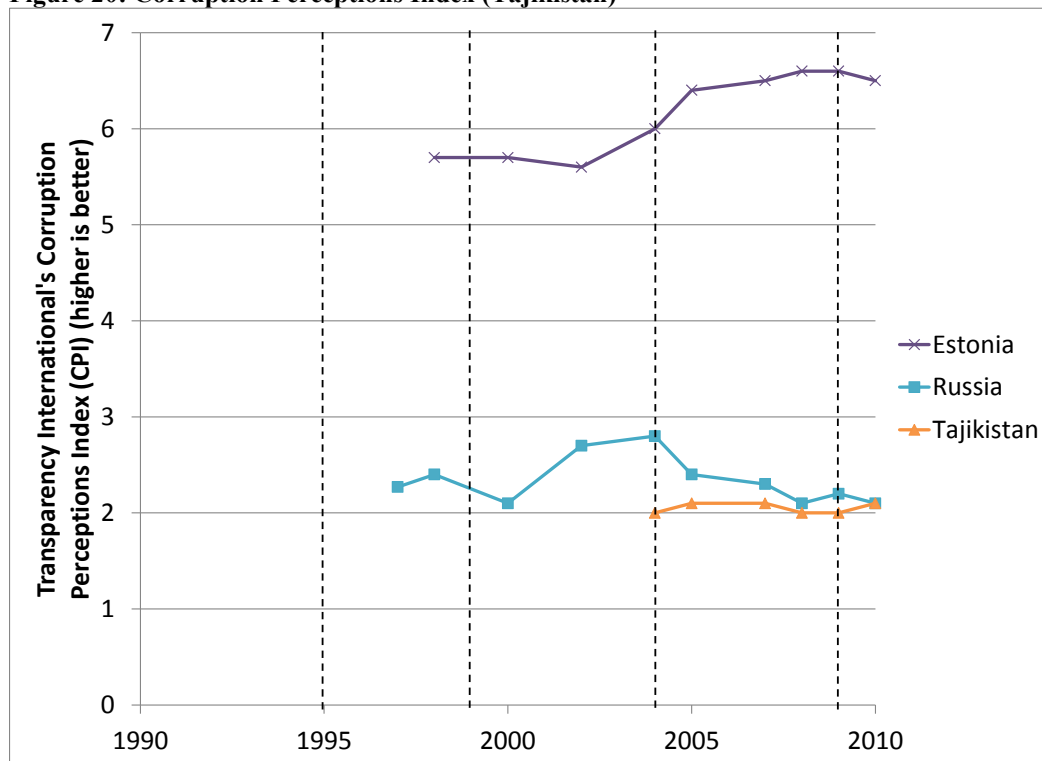
Freedom of the press in Tajikistan, as measured by Freedom House and shown in

Figure 19 above, was stable was 1994 through 2000, worsened and then improved slightly since 2004. Russia's climate for the media, on the other hand, has consistently worsened and reached parity with Tajikistan in 2008. Both countries were ranked "unfree". Freedom House cited concerns over Tajikistan's media in that criticism of the president is considered a criminal offense punishable with a jail term of five years and there is little journalism independent of the government.⁸⁷

In the *Corruption Perceptions Index* by Transparency International, in Figure 20 below, Tajikistan's perceived corruption improved slightly to reach parity with Russian perceived corruption in 2010. Since Tajikistan was included in the report in 2004, its perceived corruption was somewhat worse than Russia's.

⁸⁷ "Tajikistan: Press Freedom," <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2010>.

Figure 20: Corruption Perceptions Index (Tajikistan)



c. Language Policy and Ethnic Conflict

In the late 1980s there was a Tajik nationalist movement that pressured the government for greater support for Tajik language and culture. The language law that was passed in July of 1989 declared Tajik the official state language and passage of this law encouraged the nationalist movement. Government and private efforts promoted the Tajik language. In 1994 President Rahmon tried to balance his government's interest in placating nationalists and the Russian government, which maintained a military presence and helped Tajikistan guard its border, by declaring that Russian would remain in schools as the language of communication. Of all five Central Asian Republics, Tajikistan has the lowest number of ethnic Russians remaining as a proportion of the population at only 1.1 percent (see Table 5) and the largest percentage decline of the Russian population since 1989. However, the Russian language remains vital for economic opportunities and

access to education, especially higher education. The majority of ethnic Russians living in Tajikistan at the dissolution of the Soviet Union fled the country during the ethnic clashes of the Tajik civil war that lasted between 1992 and 1997.

With the inability to act politically and economically, language policy was not a top priority in Tajikistan. In 1996 and 1997 checks revealed that only five to ten percent of government offices were using Tajik as prescribed by the language law. Although the year 2000 had been set as a deadline to transfer all government work into Tajik, this deadline was postponed due to financial restrictions and a lack of necessary technology in Tajik.⁸⁸

There is also a risk that insurgent activity in Afghanistan, or the ethnic unrest in the Kyrgyz Republic in June 2010, could spread to Tajikistan. Tajikistan is less ethnically mixed than the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan, but has a sizeable ethnic Uzbek minority. Although outright inter-ethnic conflict in the Kyrgyz Republic has receded, the situation remains unstable and this instability affects migration rates.⁸⁹

The noteworthy economic and political events in Tajikistan are listed by period in Table 10 below. Tajikistan's political situation in the early 1990s was comparatively worse than elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. Although this is not indicated in normal migration rates, when migration rates are calculated using the ethnic Russian population as a base (see Table 13), Tajikistan's migration rates are the highest lending credence to the argument that this migration is not economically motivated, but rather driven by the political situation in Tajikistan.

⁸⁸ Landau, *Politics of Language*, 103-106.

⁸⁹ "Tajikistan Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011.

Table 10: Migration, Political and Economic Developments in Tajikistan				
	Period 1: 1991-1995	Period 2: 1996-1999	Period 3: 2000-2004	Period 4: 2005-2009
Migration Trends	10.42	4.23	1.04	2.23
Political Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violent period of the civil war - Worsening political and civil liberties, then stabilized - Relative stable press freedom, but worse than Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil war officially ends in 1997 - Political rights improved from 96-97 - Worsening civil liberties, then stabilization - Rahmon reelected 1999 - Russia still offers political advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable political liberties - Worsening civil liberties through 2002, then stable - Press freedom worsens, as do civil/political liberties in Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stable political and civil liberties - Press freedom slightly improves - Corruption perceptions stable across entire period - 2005 Russian border troops leave - Russia offers no political advantage
Economic Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP growth negative (worst year was 1994) - Worst off of all Central Asian successor states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDP rates in 1996 half of 1989 levels - High inflation/ low tax revenue - Russia/Kazakhstan economically stronger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic growth slows - Rising unemployment rates - Improvement, but still GDP growth/GDP per capita lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic growth until global economic crisis starts in 2008 - Stronger growth than Russia but comparatively worse

6. Estonia

a. Overview of Estonia

This chapter gives an overview of the economic and political events in Estonia since independence. Estonia became independent from the Soviet Union on August 20, 1991, four months earlier than the Central Asian Republics. Estonia is being used as the Baltic comparison country because of its relative economic success and its sizeable Russian minority population. This section will review the economic and political developments in Estonia since gaining independence from the Soviet Union and discuss its Russian minority and citizenship laws. A constitution was adopted in Estonia in 1992 and parliamentary elections were held later that year. By 1994, Russia had completely withdrawn its military presence from Estonia.

In 1992 Estonia replaced the ruble with the kroon (EEK) that was pegged to the Deutsche Mark and later to the Euro. During the transition to a market economy, Estonia battled inflation and a banking crisis. Estonia's constitution mandates a balanced budget and therefore, the country has very little public debt.⁹⁰ By the mid to late 1990s, Estonia's inflation rates were falling as GDP growth remained stable. Because of Estonia's European Union (EU) entry discussions, Estonia received comparatively higher foreign investment than its neighbors in 1997.⁹¹ Although Estonia had a growing trade deficit in the mid 1990s, it was offset by foreign investment and a booming tourism industry and increased privatization of planned companies encouraged further investment.⁹²

⁹⁰ "Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 1997.

⁹¹ Ibid, 3.

⁹² "Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 1997, 9.

By the mid-to-late 1990s, EU negotiations pushed Estonia to strive for fiscal reform and to synchronize legislation to meet EU norms. Estonia's government displayed a willingness to intervene if the economy seemed to grow at an unstable pace. By 1996 the construction sector, one that had been the hardest hit in the restructuring of the economy post-independence, rose over 35 percent in the first half of 1997. Although inflation rates and consumer prices were expected to be higher than its Baltic neighbors in 1997, Estonia's consumer prices increased less than projected and its inflation rates stabilized by 1999.⁹³

Other economic factors had a positive impact on the Estonian economy compared to Russia. Unemployment rates started falling in the mid-1990s as workers' wages increased. Estonia had a shortage of skilled labor which affected the economy especially in the years following independence.⁹⁴ Although Estonia had a policy of a balanced budget, Estonia received its first credit ratings in 1997, along with Latvia, Hungary and Poland. Additionally, Estonia repaid its credits to the World Bank before its deadlines in 1998.⁹⁵

b. Political Situation and Language Policy

Based on Freedom House reporting, Estonia is considering a free electoral democracy with three independent branches of government. The president, in contrast to the independent states of the former Soviet Union in Central Asia, is largely a ceremonial head of state and the prime minister is the head of the government. Approximately 10

⁹³ Ibid, 9.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 16.

⁹⁵ "Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania: Country Report," Economist Intelligence Unit, 1998, 17.

percent of Estonia's Parliament members represent ethnic minorities and political parties are allowed to organize and operate freely in Estonia. All major political parties are represented in parliament.⁹⁶

Although corruption was an issue at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Estonia has ranked highly in Transparency International's rankings on perceived corruption since the mid-1990s indicating low levels of corruption. The judiciary is independent and rights of citizens are observed by the police. Governmental legislation and decisions are available online for public viewing and discussion and the internet is not restricted by the government, regardless of content. Freedom of the press is guaranteed by Estonia's constitution and guaranteed in practice as well. Additionally, freedom of assembly is not limited by the government except in cases where gatherings could inhibit public safety.⁹⁷

In 1989, ethnic Russians comprised 30 percent of Estonia's population. In 2009, ethnic Russians made up 25.6 percent of Estonia's population, a 4.4 percent decrease from 1989 which is comparatively lower than Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.⁹⁸ Estonia's official language is Estonian, but the government allows Russian-language schools to operate freely. However, the government still promotes Estonian language and culture and in 2008, the government requested 60 percent Estonian instruction in Estonia's Russian-language public schools to transform monolingual schools into bilingual ones. Estonian laws require that teachers in public schools have a minimum

⁹⁶ "Estonia: Freedom in the World," Freedom House, 2009.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ "Estonia," CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/en.html>.

competency in Estonian and their ability can be tested since they are state employees. However, teachers are not fired if they fail the language test, but rather offered free Estonian language classes to improve their language skills.⁹⁹

In order to qualify for citizenship, Estonian language skills must be demonstrated, a law that has proved controversial for Estonia's sizeable ethnic Russian minority. Anyone who has resided in Estonia since 1940 was eligible for automatic citizenship, but anyone arriving later had to qualify for citizen through a naturalization process which included the Estonian language test.¹⁰⁰ As for public servants, anyone attempting to qualify for citizenship is eligible for government sponsored language courses.¹⁰¹ Ability to converse freely in Estonian is required for certain jobs such as government employees and medical personnel. Although some Russians allege that this law leads to employment discrimination, a 2008 survey indicated that Estonian language skills had improved amongst ethnic Russians and that the pay gap between Estonians and Russians had decreased.¹⁰² Despite restrictive language and citizenship laws, ethnic Russians and their interests are represented in parliament, a contrast to Central Asia's ethnic minorities.

Estonia and its Baltic neighbors became European Union and NATO members in 2004, a process that had begun in 1995 when Estonia applied for EU membership. A free trade agreement with the EU had already come into force in 1994 and EU negotiations

⁹⁹ Clifford Levy, "Estonia Raises Its Pencils to Erase Russian," New York Times, June 7, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/08/world/europe/08estonia.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Clifford Levy, "Soviet Legacy Lingers as Estonia Defines Its People," New York Times, August 15, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/16/world/europe/16estonia.html>.

¹⁰² "Freedom in the World: Estonia," Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7605>.

with Estonia began in 1998. These negotiations lasted until 2002. In 2003 a referendum allowed Estonian citizens to vote on EU accession and Estonia became an EU member in 2004 along with Latvia and Lithuania and other Central and Eastern European countries. In late 2007, Estonia joined the Schengen zone allowing visa-free travel throughout Europe and in 2011 Estonia adopted the Euro as its currency.¹⁰³

Estonia's scores in the Freedom House and Transparency International measures can be found in the previous sections of the paper. The political rights score is shown on page 34; the civil liberties score is on page 35; the freedom of the press score is on page 36; and Estonia's corruption perceptions index score is on page 37. In Table 11 below, the most important political and economic developments are listed by migration period. Initially after independence, Estonia offered no economic advantage to Russia based on the economic measures evaluated in this paper, but offered a political one.

¹⁰³ "Freedom in the World: Estonia," Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7605>.

Table 11: Migration, Political and Economic Developments in Estonia				
	Period 1: 1991-1995	Period 2: 1996-1999	Period 3: 2000-2004	Period 4: 2005-2009
Migration Rates	9.32	2.36	0.35	0.29
Political Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political rights score declines - Slight increase in civil liberties - Equal to Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil liberties scores stable - Improvement of civil liberties - Better than Russia politically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil liberties score improves in 2004/corruption scores stable - Offers political advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil and political liberties scores stable - Corruption scores improve
Economic Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High inflation/banking crisis - Introduction of Estonian currency in - Strict language laws implemented - Worse than Russia economically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade agreement with EU begins - Negotiations with the EU begin - Higher unemployment than Russia, but higher GDP per capita 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estonia becomes an EU member in 2004 - Higher GDP per capita than Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU becomes a member of the Schengen zone - Higher GDP per capita than Russia, but higher unemployment

7. Conclusions and Projections

Korobkov's categorization does not account for certain instances of politically motivated migration. These political factors can include discriminatory language policy that obstructs members of the non-titular nationality access to education and employment opportunities, lack of political and civil liberties, civil conflict and political turbulence. Especially in cases where civil and political liberties, including the rule of law, freedom of the press, religion and assembly, democratic elections and open political party development are clearly declining or never existed, these factors are calculated against the economic backdrop to make a migration decision. Certain Central Asian and Baltic cases underscore the relevance of political factors to migration trends. However, in some cases, such as Tajikistan in periods three and four, where the political circumstances cannot explain migration, economic factors, including GDP growth, GDP per capita, unemployment rates and future economic prospective can offer insight to migration trends, which is congruent with Korobkov's analysis.

Table 12: Average Migration Rates to Russia (per thousand)				
Country	Period 1: 1991-1995	Period 2: 1996-1999	Period 3: 2000-2004	Period 4: 2005-2009
Kazakhstan	15.31	13.51	4.15	2.66
Kyrgyzstan	14.12	3.10	2.25	3.92
Tajikistan	10.42	4.23	1.04	2.23
Estonia	9.32	2.36	0.35	0.29
Source: Russian Demographic Yearbook (Демографический Ежегодник России)				

In period two from 1996 through 1999, Kazakhstan's outmigration rates to Russia were higher than the other comparison countries, despite higher GDP growth in absolute terms compared to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, although still lower than Russia's (see Figure 4: GDP per capita in Central Asia, 1992-2010). This comparatively high migration rate speaks against an economic argument for this migration since Kazakhstan's GDP is

closest to Russia's in absolute terms. In the case of Kazakhstan, the shared border with Russia is a distinctive feature that supports also a proximity argument for migration rather than an economic one. Kazakhstan in period two is a country that does not fit into Korobkov's analysis since migration was still almost as high as period one and Korobkov argues that political migration dwindled in this period and economic reasons started becoming more important for migration.

Another country that is not accounted for in Korobkov's analysis is Estonia. In the turmoil of the political and economic transformation after the collapse of the Soviet Union, migration rates from Estonia to Russia were comparable to those from Central Asia. By 1996, the second period, migration rates had slowed to less than a third of those from the initial period, and by 2000, migrations rates slowed to virtually zero and stabilized. Since independence Estonia has been ranked higher than the Central Asian states and Russia on political measures such as political liberties, civil liberties, corruption in the public sector and freedom of the press and had a faster economic recovery. The slowing migration rates also correspond with Estonia's negotiations on EU membership supporting the idea that despite some discriminatory language and citizenship policies, the political outlook in Estonia was better than Russia as a potential migration destination. Since Estonia offered no major economic advantage to Russia immediately after independence, relatively low migration rates to Russia indicates that migration (or a lack thereof) was politically motivated in period one.

The early years after independence showed a political gap between Central Asia and Russia. However, the political situation in Russia worsened over time to match the situation in Central Asia. These overall political trends indicate how Russia was an

appealing migration destination in the initial years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but as political and civil liberties were encroached upon in Russia, the country lost some of its appeal. Simultaneously, political policy, especially strict language policy, which specifically targeted Russian speakers and members of non-titular ethnic group, presented another reason to migrate to Russia. Although not covered in the scope of this paper, the cases of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan where the strictest language policy was enacted and enforced, including alphabet changes, could lend support for migration due to political discrimination. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan's later leniency in language policy indicates that political elites believed language policy was a factor contributing to the outmigration of ethnic Russians.

Additionally, although migration policy changes could have decreased the push to Russia, lax enforcement meant that government policy had little effect on migration contrary to Korobkov's emphasis on migration policy in the Russian Federation in periods three and four. Although outmigration rates from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan increased slightly, the rate from Kazakhstan actually decreased from period three to period four, contrary to Korobkov's argument. Liberalization of migration policy seemed to play little, if any, role in migration in periods three and four. Another potential explanation for Kyrgyzstan's increased migration in period four is the political upheaval brought upon by the Tulip Revolution since economic conditions did not drastically change in period four in Kyrgyzstan.

The importance of ethnic Russian migration can partially be addressed by calculating migration rates using the ethnic Russian population in the country as a base. Using these calculations (see Table 13 below), migration rates for certain countries seem

comparatively higher, such as from Tajikistan in period one. These migration rates differ from the original migration rates that were calculated based on the entire country's population in that they are calculated using the 1989 ethnic Russian population for each country as a base. Since 1989, Tajikistan has lost 78.8 percent of its ethnic Russian population, whereas Kyrgyzstan has lost only 23.8 percent and Kazakhstan has lost 40.9 percent; Estonia's has decreased by 31.1 percent (see Table 5 for reference). Tajikistan's comparatively high loss indicates that the civil war played a role in the decision of ethnic Russians to migrate from Tajikistan back to Russia.

Table 13: Migration rates based on ethnic Russian population, 1989				
Period:	1991-1995	1996-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009
Kazakhstan	38.84	33.12	10.13	6.73
Kyrgyzstan	69.25	15.86	12.19	22.52
Tajikistan	147.40	63.54	16.72	39.33
Estonia	30.75	7.78	1.15	0.97
Source: 1989 Soviet census and the Russian Demographic Yearbook (Демографический Ежегодник России)				

Tajikistan's GDP has declined in recent years. The 2006 GDP per capita is only 85 percent of its 1990 levels and Tajikistan's population is growing quickly, from 5.3 million in 1991 to 7.3 million in 2009. These changes have led to economic hardships including high unemployment rates and little economic opportunity. Tajikistan's initial migration seemed driven by political factors (thus often the migrants were not from the titular majority, but rather Russians, Germans, Uzbeks, etc.) because of the civil war. Following the war, economic reasons tended to guide the decision to migrate, as well as the increasing availability of social networks abroad to ease transitions and find jobs. Outmigration from Tajikistan is an example where Korobkov's argument is fitting because migration in periods one and two were motivated by ethnic and political factors, whereas periods three and four were motivated by economic ones.

Korobkov also contends that the ethnic composition of outmigration from Central Asia in periods three and four is primarily from the titular majorities because ethnically motivated migration was exhausted. However, based on statistics from Rosstat (obtained through the 2008 IOM Russian migration report) for the years 2002 through 2006, of 55,706 migrants from Kazakhstan in 2002, only 1,946 were ethnic Kazakh. For period four, of 38,606 migrants from Kazakhstan in 2006, only 1,862 were ethnic Kazakh. These numbers are similar for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, although the number of ethnic Tajiks was comparatively higher as a proportion of the migrant influx from Tajikistan. This ethnic composition of migration suggests that the officially recorded migrants were likely ethnic Russians or ethnic Slavs and not from the titular majorities especially since non-Russian government sources such as the World Bank approximate that migration to the Russian Federation is much higher than these official data suggest.¹⁰⁴

Large proportions of migrants from Central Asia in the later periods were still ethnic Russians and this outmigration suggests that ethnic factors still played a role in migration despite changes in language laws. The migrants that were more likely to be unrecorded in these later periods were more likely temporary labor migrants who could have become victims of trafficking and forced labor if they did not understand registration procedures and how to obtain a work permit. The ineffective migration policy in Russia needs to be addressed by Russian authorities for the protection of migrants' rights and for the sake of better official recording keeping as Korobkov recommends as the conclusion of his analysis on migration.

¹⁰⁴ "Are You Happy to Cheat Us?" Human Rights Watch Report, 2009.

Korobkov's categorization of migration serves as a useful analytical tool and with a deeper review of political and ethnic factors, this categorization can be improved.

Korobkov contends that migration in periods one and two was politically motivated and by period three migration was primarily economically motivated. He also asserts that migration policy in the Russian Federation affected migration levels in the latter two periods. I contend that migration trends differ from Korobkov's analysis in some instances. Kazakhstan, for example, exhibits qualities of high politically based migration compared to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in period two. Estonia, although not included in Korobkov's classification, also has politically motivated migration in period one and the later lack of migration supports economic reasons as would fit into his categorization. Additionally, my analysis supports the argument that Korobkov overstated the importance of Russian migration policy and its effects on migration.

Overall, the interplay between ethnic, political and economic factors affecting migration does not consistently affect migration trends in the same way, although there are clear relationships between political and economic changes and migration. These factors are not reliably important in determining migration, but from time to time they can be used to describe migration motivations. Through this analysis, I have found evidence that ethnic and political factors impacted migration in these initial periods. There is also some evidence that economic factors play a more limited role in the latest period. A suggestion for improvement on this analysis would be to use personal interviews and surveys of individuals who have migrated in the different periods to evaluate the significance of political, ethnic and economic considerations in their decision-making process.

APPENDIX

Migration Inflows to the Russian Federation, 1992-1998							
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Kazakhstan	183,891	195,672	346,363	241,427	172,860	235,903	209,880
Kyrgyzstan	62,897	96,814	66,489	27,801	18,886	13,752	10,997
Tajikistan	72,556	68,761	45,645	41,799	32,508	23,053	18,396
Estonia	24,440	14,340	11,250	8,591	5,869	3,483	1,771
Latvia	27,271	25,891	26,370	14,859	8,227	5,658	3,577
Lithuania	15,354	19,407	8,456	4,126	3,055	1,785	1,384

Migration Inflows to the Russian Federation, 2000-2006							
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Kazakhstan	124,903	65,226	55,706	29,552	40,150	51,945	38,606
Kyrgyzstan	15,536	10,740	13,139	6,948	9,511	15,592	15,669
Tajikistan	11,043	6,742	5,967	5,346	3,339	4,717	6,523
Estonia	786	535	534	445	446	432	347
Latvia	1,785	1,283	990	906	819	726	766
Lithuania	945	758	722	535	339	360	371

Migration Inflows to the Russian Federation, 2007-2009			
	2007	2008	2009
Kazakhstan	40,258	39,964	38,830
Kyrgyzstan	24,731	24,014	23,265
Tajikistan	17,309	20,717	27,028
Estonia	508	476	538
Latvia	887	716	664
Lithuania	537	455	443

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